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BOVVELS OPENED:

O R,

A DISCOVERY OF THE
Neare and Deare Love, Union and
Communion betwixt CHRIST, and the
CHVRCH, and consequently betwixt Him
and every believing Soule.

Delivered in divers Sermons on the fourth, fifth
and sixth Chapters of the CANTICLES.

By that Reverend and faithfull Minister of the Word,
Dr. SIBBS, late Preacher unto the Honourable
Society of Grayes-Inne, and Master of Katharine
Hall in CAMBRIDGE.

Being in part finished by his owne pen in his life-time,
and the rest of them perused and corrected by
those whom he intrusted with the pub-
lition of his Works.

Richard Sibbes

CANT. 4. II.

*Thou hast ravished my heart, my Sister, my Spouse: Thou hast ravi-
shed my heart with one of thine eyes, and with one chaine of thy
necke.*

LONDON,

Printed by G.M. for George Edwards in the Old Baily in
Greene-Arbour, at the Signe of the Angell. 1641.

OPINION

ADISCOVERY OF THE

The cause of Desires, or, The finding

of common sense, per the true Charters, and the

true meaning of the lawes of England.

With a new Appendix, &c.

DISCOURSES ON THE GOVERNMENT OF ENGLAND,

With a new Appendix, &c.

Also, A new Appendix, &c.

HONORATISSIMO DOMINO,
DOMINO
EDVARDO *VICE-COMITI*
MANDEVILLE.

QVEM, VT
VERÆ NOBILITATIS
DELICIAS CANDORIS NIVEM,
IN RES CHRISTI,

ET,
ALIORVM COMMODA
EFFUSISSIMVM,
SUSPICIMUS, COLIMUS;

UNA QVE,
CONCIONES HAS IN CANTICA
POSTHUMAS

IN
AMORIS GRATIAM QVO AVTHO-
REM IPSE COMPLEXUS EST NO-
STRÆQE IN DNEM ILLIVS MERI-
TISSIMÆ OBSREVANTIAE
TESTIMONIVM

D. D.

THOMAS GOODWIN.
PHILIPPVS NYE.

MONKS OF ST. DOMINIC
EDWARD OF THE COUNTRY
MAKING
A MARCH
TO THE HOLY LAND
DESTITUTUS CANDORIS NIVEL
IN RE CRISTI ALIA
ALIO MUNDO COMITATI
ET TERRAM SICULAM
SUSCIPIT GOTIUM
OMNIBUS IN CHURCH
TESTIMONIIS
IN
AMORIS GRATIAM QUAVTHO
VAN LIEGE COMPLEXUS EST NO
ETRAGE IN DIA TRILIAZMERT
PATER OF PATER MARIA
TESTIMONIIS

THOMAS GOODMAN
PHILIPPS JESUIT

To the Christian Reader.

HE perusal of this Booke, being committed unto me by an antient and a faithfull friend of mine, I found it (I confesse) so full of heavenly treasure, and such lively expressiōs of the unvaluable riches of the love of Christ toward all his poore servants that sue and seeke unto him, that I sent unto the godly and learned Author earnestly intreating him to publish the same, judging it altogether unmeet that so precious matter should be concealed from publike use. When he excused himselfe by undervaluing his owne meditations; but withall signified his desire of the Churches good, if by any thing in his works it might never so little be promoted, I could not but declare my selfe in recommending this Treatise, as a very profitable and excellent help both to the understanding of that dark and most divine

A

Scrip-

To the Reader.

Scripture, and also to kindle in the heart
all heavenly affections unto Iesu Christ,

It is well known how backward I am,
and ever have been to cumber the Presse,
but yet I would not be guilty in depriving
the deare children of God of the spirituall
and sweet consolations, which are here
very plentifully offered unto them.

And the whole frame of all these Ser-
mons, is carried with such Wisdome, Gra-
vity, Piety, judgement, & F xperience, that
it commends it self unto all that are godly
wise : and I doubt not but that they shall
 finde their temptations answered , their
 fainting spirits revived, their understand-
ings enlightened, and their graces confir-
med, so as they shall have cause to praise
God for the worthy Authors godly and
 painfull labours. And thus desiring the
 Father of all mercies, and the God of all
 comfort, to blesse this worke to the con-
 solation and edification of those that seek
 his favour, and desire to feare his holy
 Name, I rest,

Thine in Iesu Christ,

I. Dod.



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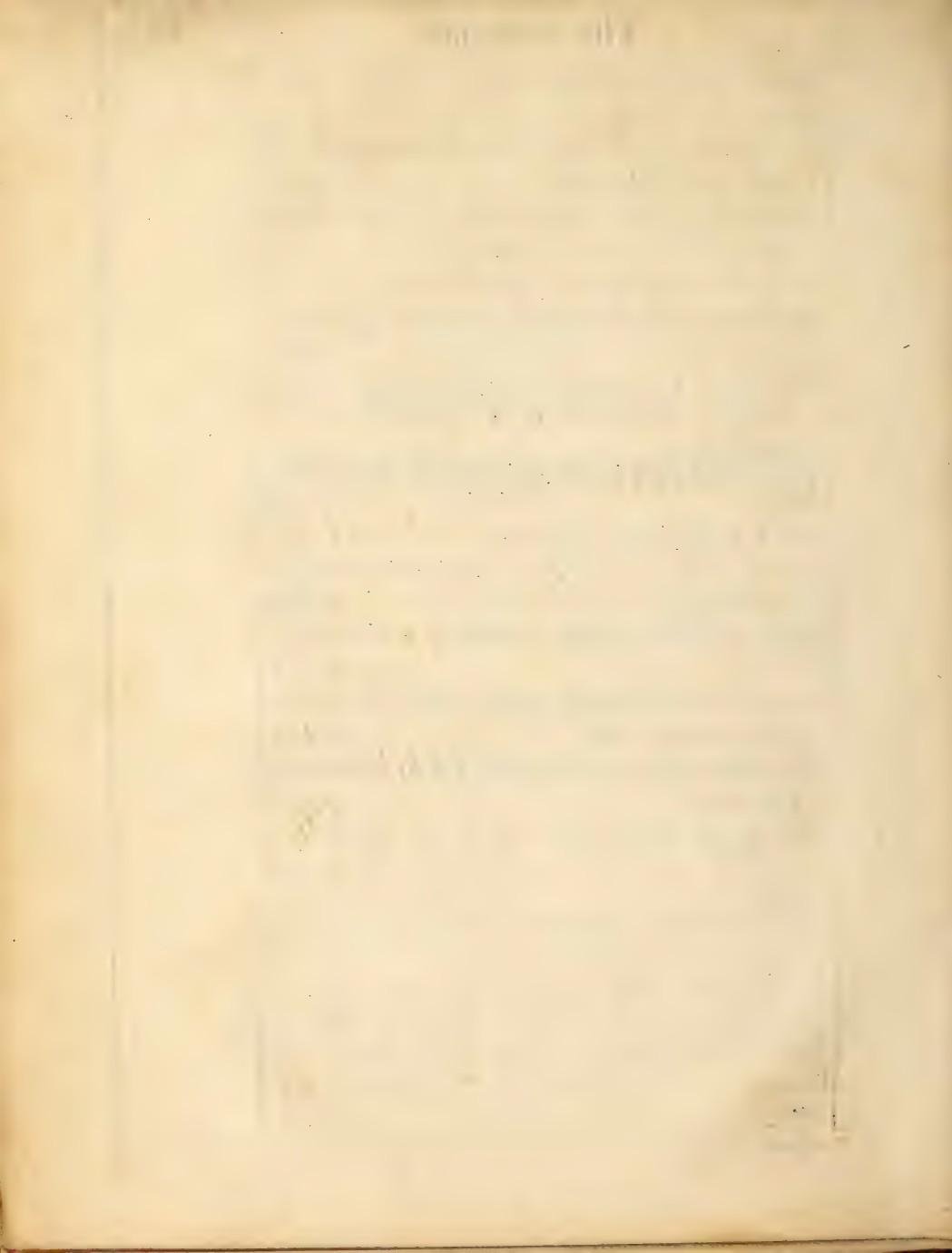
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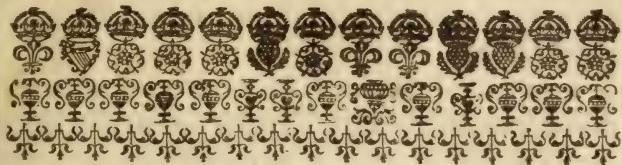
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SERMON I.

C A N T . V . I .

*I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I
have eaten my hony-combe with my hony: I have
drunke my wine with my milke ; Eat O friends,
Drinke, yeadrinke abundantly,O beloved !*



Ther booke of *Solomon* lie
more obvious and open to
common understanding; but
as none entred into the *Holy
of Holies*, but the *High Priest*,
so none can enter into the
mystery of this *Song of
Songs*, but such as have
more near Communion with *Christ*. *Songs*, and
especially *Marriage-Songs*, serve to expresse
mens owne *Joyes*, and others praises. So this
Booke containes

Introduction.

Levit.

*The mutuall Joyes, and mutuall Praises betwixt
Christ and his Church.*

And as *Christ* and his *Church* are the greatest
persons that partake of humane nature, so what-

soever is excellent in the whole world, is borrowed to set out the excellencies of these two great Lovers.

It is called *Solomons Song*; who next unto Christ, was the greatest Son of *Wisdom* that ever the *Church* bred: whose understanding, as it was large as the sand of the sea, so his affections, especially that of *Love* was as large: as we may see by his many wives, & by the delight he sought to take in whatsoever nature could affoord. Which affection of *Love* in him misplaced, had been his undoing, but that he was one beloved of God; who by his Spirit raised his soule to lovely Objects of a higher nature. Here in this argument there is no danger for the deepest wit, or the largest affection (yea of a *Solomon*) to over-reach: for the knowledge of the love of Christ to his *Church*, is above all knowledge. The Angels themselves may admire it, though they cannot comprehend it. It may well therefore be called the *Song of Solomon*; the most excellent *Song*, of a man of the highest conceit, and deepest apprehension, and of the highest matters, *The Intercourse betwixt Christ the highest Lord of Lords, and his best beloved contracted Spouse.*

There are diverse things in this *Song*, that a corrupt heart (unto which all things are defiled) may take offence; but to the pure all things are *pure*. Such a sinfull abuse of this heavenly booke is far from the intention of the holy-Ghost in it, which is by stouping low to us, to take advantage to raise us higher unto him; that by taking advantage

advantage of the sweetest passage of our life (*Marriage*) and the most delightfull affection (*Love*) in the sweetest manner of expression (by a *Song*) he might carry up the soule to things of a heavenly nature. We see in Summer, that one heate weakens another; and a great light being near a little one, drawes away and obscures the flame of the other: so it is when the affections are taken up higher to their fit Object, they die unto all earthly things, whilst that heavenly flame consumes and wastes all base affections and earthly desires. Amongst other wayes of *Mortification*, there be two remarkable:

Simile.

Simile.

Two especiall
wayes of morti-
fication.

1. By imbibtering all earthly things unto us,
whereby the affections are deaded to them.

2. By shewing more noble, excellent, & fit objects.

That the soul issuing more largely and strongly into them, may be diverted, and so by degrees die unto other things. The holy Spirit hath chosen this way in this *Song*, by elevating and raising our *affections* and *love*, to take it off from other things, that so it might run in its right channell. It is pitty that a sweet streme should not rather run into a *garden*, then into a puddle. What a shame is it, that man having in him such excellent affections, as *Love*, *Ioy*, *Delight*, should cleave to durtie base things that are worse than himselfe, so becomming debased like them? Therefore the Spirit of God, out of mercy and pitty to man, would raise up his affections, by taking comparison from earthly things, leading to higher matters, that onely deserve *Love*, *Ioy*,

Delight, and Admiratiōn. Let Gods stouping to us, occasion our rising up unto him; for, here the greatest things, The *Mystery* of *Mysteries*, the *Communion* betwixt *Christ* and his *Church*, is set out in the familiar comparison of a *Marriage*, that so we might the better see it in the glasse of a comparison, which we cannot so directly conceive of, as we may see the *Sun* in water, whose beames we cannot so directly look upon: Only our care must be, not to looke so much on the *colours*, as the *Picture*; and not so much on the *Pi-
cture*, as on the *Person* it selfe represented: that we looke not so much to the *resemblance*, as to the *Person resembled*.

Some would have *Solomon* by a *Spirit of Prophecy*, to take here a view of all the time, from his *Age* to the second comming of *Christ*: and in this *Song*, as in an abridgement, to set downe the severall *Passages* and *Periods* of the *Church*, in severall ages, as containing diverse things which are more correspondent to one age of the *church* than another. But howsoever this *Song* may contain (we deny not) *A story of the Church in severall ages*: yet this bindes not, but that *most passages of it agrees to the spirituall state of the Church in every age*; as most Interpreters have thought. In this *Song there is*,

1. *A strong desire of the Church of nearer Communion with Christ; and then,*
2. *Some declining againe in affection.*
3. *After this we have Her recovery and regaining againe of Love; after which,*

4. The Church falleth again into a declining of Affection, whereupon followeth a further strangeness of Christ to her then before, which continueth until,
5. That the Church perceiving of Christs constant affection unto her, notwithstanding her unkind dealing, recovereth and cleaveth fasterto Christ than ever before, Chap. 3.

These passages agree to the experience of the best Christians in the state of their owne lives. This observation must carry strength through this whole Song, That, there is the same regard of the whole Church, and of every particular member in regard of the chiefest priviledges and graces that accompany salvation. There is the same reason of every drop of water, as of the whole Ocean, all is water; and of every spark of fire, as of the whole Element of fire, all is fire; of those Hemogeneall bodies, as we call them, there is the same respect of the part, and of the whole. And therefore as the whole Church is the spouse of Christ, so is every particular Christian: and as the whole church desires still nearer Communion with Christ, so doth every particular member. But to come to the words:

I am come into my Garden, &c.

This Chapter is not so well broken and divided from the former as it might have bin; for it were better and more consequent, that the last Verse of the former Chapter were added to the beginning of this.

CANT. IV. XVI.

Awake, O North-wind, and come thou South,
B 3 blow

An Observati-
on for the whole
Song.

blow upon my Garden, that the Spices therof may flow out; let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

And therfore, by reason of connexion of this Chapter with the former Verse, we will first speake somwhat of it briefly, only to make way for that which followes. The words containe,

1. *A turning of Christ's speech to the winds to blow upon his Garden: with the End why? That the Spices thereof may flow out.*
2. *We have an invitation of Christ by the church, to come into his Garden, with the End, To eat his pleasant fruits.*

Quest.

Answ.

It may be a Question, whether this *Command* be the words of *Christ*, or the *desire* of his *Spouse*. The words are spoken by *Christ*, because he calls it (*My Garden*) and the *Church* after invites him to eat of (*His*) *pleasant fruits*, not of (*Hers*) yet the words may be likewise, an *answer* to a former *secret desire* of the *Church*; whereof the order is this. The *Church* being sensible of some deadnesse of *Spirit*; secretly desires some further quickning. *Christ* then answers those desires, by commanding the winds to blow upon her. For, ordinarily *Christ* first stirs up desires, and then, answers the desires of his own *Spirit*, by further increase, as here.

*Awake thou North-wind, and come thou South,
and b'ow upon my Garden, &c.*

For the first Point named, we see here, that *Christ* sends forth his *Spirit*, with Command to all *meanes*, under the name of *North* and *South-wind*,

wind, to further the fruitfulnesse of his *Church*. The wind is natures fanne, what winds are to the *Garden*, that the Spirit of *Christ*, in the use of meanes, is to the soule. From comparison fetcht from *Christ's* commanding the winds; we may in generall observe, That all *Creatures stand in obedience to Christ, as ready at a word, whensoever he speakes to them*. They are all as it were asleep untill he awakes them. He can call for the wind out of his treasures when he pleases, he holds them in his fist.

*Observation
from Christ's
commanding
the winds.*

Which may comfort all those that are *Christ's*, that they are under one that hath all creatures at his becke under him, to doe them service, and at his checke to do them no harme. This drew the *Disciples* in admiration to say, *What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the Seas obey him?* And cannot the same power still the winds and waves of the *Churches and States*, and cause a sudden calme, if (as the *Disciples*) we awake him with our prayers.

Use.

Mat. 8. 27.

Secondly, we see here, that *Christ* speakes to winds contrary one to another, both in regard of the coasts from whence they blow, and in their quality: but both agree in this, that both are necessary for the *Garden*: where we see, That the courses that *Christ* takes, and the meanes that he uses with his *Church*, may seeme contrary, but by a wise ordering all agree in the wholesome issue. A prosperous and an afflicted condition are contrary, a milde and a sharp course may seeme to crosse one another. Yet, sweetly they agree in this, that as the

*Observation
from the con-
trary blasts
of winds.*

Church needeth both, so Christ uses both for the Churches good. The North is a nipping wind, and the South a cherishing wind, therefore the South-wind is the welcommer and sweeter after the North-wind hath blowne. But howsoever, all things are ours, Paul, Apollos, Cephas, things present and to come, life, death, &c. all things worke together for good to us, being in Christ.

¹ Cor. 3.21.
Rom. 8.28.

Use 1.

Hence it is that the manifold wisedome of Christ maketh use of such variety of conditions; and hence it is, that the Spirit of Christ is mild in some mens Ministeries, and sharp in others. Nay, in the very same Minister, as the state of the soule they have to deale withall requires.

2.

Sometimes againe, *the people of God need purging, and sometimes refreshing*, whereupon the Spirit of God carries it selfe surely to both conditions, and the Spirit in the godly themselves drawes good out of every condition; sure they are that all winds blow them good ; and were it not for their good, no winds should blow upon them. But in regard that these times of ours, by long peace and plenty, grow cold, heavy, and securer, we need therefore all kinds of winds to blow upon us, and all little enough. Time was when we were more quicke and lively; but now the heat of our spirits are abated; we must therefore take heed of it, and quicken those things that are ready to die, or else instead of the North and South winde, God will send an East-winde that shall drie up all as it is, Hos. 13.15.

Revel. 3.2.

3.

Again, if Christ can raise or lay, bind up or let loose

loose all kind of *winds* at his pleasure, then if means be wanting or fruitlesse; It is he that sayes to the clouds, drop not, and to the winds blow not; Therefore, we must acknowledge him in want or plenty of meanes. The Spirit of Christ in the use of meanes is a free agent, sometimes blowes strongly, sometimes more mildly, somtimes not at all, no creature hath these *winds* in a bag at command; and therefore it is wisedome to yeeld to the gales of the Spirit, though in some other things (as Solomon observes) it may hinderto observe the *winds*, yet here it is necessary and profitable to observe the winds of the Spirit.

Eccl. 5.4.

Now for the cleare understanding of what we are to speake of, let us first observe,

1. Why the Spirit of God in the use of the meanes is compared to wind. And then,
 2. Why the Church is compared to a Garden : which shal be handled in the proper place. But first for the wind.
- I.** The wind bloweth where it listeth, as it is, Ioh. 3.8.
So the Spirit of God blowes freely, and openeth the heart of some, and powreth grace plentifully in them.
2. The winde (especially the North-winde) bath a cleansing force ; so the Spirit of God purgeth our hearts from dead works to serve the living God, making us partakers of the divine nature,
2 Pet 1.
 3. The wind disperseth, and scattereth clouds, and makes a serenity in the ayre. So doth the Spirit disperse such clouds, as corruption and Satan
raise

In what Re-
spects the Spi-
rit of God is
compared to
wind.

raise up in the soule, that we may clearely see
the face of God in Iesus Christ.

4. *The wind hath a cooling and a tempring quality, and tempers the distemper of nature :* as in some hot countries there be yearly Anniversarie winds which blow at certaine times in Summer, tempering the heate. So the Spirit of God allayeth the unnaturall heats of the soul in fierie Tentations, and bringeth it into a good temper.
5. *The wind being subtil searcheth into every corner and cranny.* So the Spirit likewise is of a searching nature, and discerneth betwixt the joynts and the marrow, betwixt the flesh & the spirit, &c. searching those hidden corruptions, that nature could never have found out.
6. *The winde hath a cherishing and a fructifying force.* So the Spirit is a quickening and a cherishing Spirit, and maketh the heart which is as a barren wildernesse, to be fruitfull.
7. *The wind hath a conveying power of sweet smels in the ayre, to carry them from one to another.* So the Spirit in the word conveyeth the seeds of Grace and comfort from one to another ; it drawes out what sweetnesse is in the spirits of men, and makes them fragrant and delightfull to others.
8. *The wind againe beares downe all before it, beats downe houses and trees, like the Cedars in Lebanon, turns them up by the roots, and layes all flat.* So the Spirit is mighty in operation, there is no standing before it : It brings downe moun-

mountaines, and every high thing that exalts it selfe, and layes them levell:nay, the Romane and those other mighty Empires could not stand before it.

For these respects and the like, the blowing of the Spirit is compared to wind. For which end Christ here commands the winds to

Blow upon his Garden.

[To blow, &c.] See here the order, linking and concatenation of things one under another, to the prospering of a poore flower or plant in a garden; not only soyle is needfull, but ayre and wind also, and the influence of Heaven: and God commanding all, as here, the winds to blow upon his Garden. To this end as a wonderfull mercy to his people, it is said, *Hos. 2. 22.* *And it shall come to passe in that day, I will heare saith the Lord, I will heare the Heavens, and they shall heare the earth, and the earth shall heare the corne, the wine, and the oyle; and they shall heare Iezreel.* As the Creatures are from God, so the order and dependance of creatures one from another: to teach us, not onely what to pray for, but also what to pray fitly for. Not only to pray for the dew of heaven, but also for seasonable and cherishing winds. It is not the soyle, but the season that makes fruitfull; and that from seasonable winds and influences. So, in spirituall things there is a chaine of Causes and Effects; Prayer comes from Faith, *Rom. 10. 14.* Faith from the Hearing of the Word, Hearing from a Preacher; by whom God by his Spirit blowes upon the heart, and a Preacher from Gods sending. If the God

*Non ager, sed
annus facit
fructus.*

God of Nature should but hinder and take away one linke of natures chaine , the whole frame would be disturbed. Well, That which *Christ* commands here, is for the winds to

Blow upon his Garden.

In what Re-
spects we need
the blowing of
the Spirit.

Exod. 17.12.

And we need blowing, our spirits will be becalmed els, and stand at a stay, and Satan will be sure by himself, and such as are his bellowes, to blow up the seeds of sinfull lusts in us. For, there are two spirits in the *Church*, the one alwayes blowing against the other. Therefore, the best had need to be stirred up, otherwise with *Moses*, their hands will be ready to fall down, and abate in their affection. Therefore we need *Blowing*.

1. In regard of our naturall inability.
2. In regard of our dulnes and heavines cleaving to nature occasionally.
3. In regard of contrary winds from without, Satan hath his bellowes filled with his spirit, that hinders the worke of grace all they can, so that we need not only *Christ's* blowing, but also his stopping other contrary winds, that they blow not, Rev. 7.1.
4. In regard of the estate and condition of the new Covenant, wherein all beginning, growth, and ending, is from *Grace*, and nothing but *Grace*.
5. Because old *Grace*, without a fresh supply, will not hold against new crosses and tentations.

Therefore when *Christ* drawes, let us run after him; when he blowes, let us open unto him, It may be the last blast that ever we shall have from him.

And

Use.

And let us set upon Duties with this encouragement, that *Christ* will blow upon us, not only to prevent us, but also to maintaine his own Graces in us. But O ! where is this stirring up of our selves, and one another upon these grounds ?

But, *Why is the Church compared to a Garden?*

Christ herein takes all manner of termes to expresse himselfe and the state of the Church, as it is to him, to shew us that wheresoever we are, we may have occasion of heavenly thoughts, to raise up our thoughts to higher matters. His Church is his *Temple*, when we are in the *Temple*, it is a *field* when we are there ; A *Garden*, if we walke in a *Garden* : It is also a *Spouse* and a *Sister*, &c. But more particularly the *Church* is resembled to a *Garden*.

1. Because a *Garden* is taken out of the common wast ground, to be appropriated to a more particular use ; so the *Church* of *Christ* is taken out of the wildernes of this wast world, to a particular use. It is in respect of the rest, as *Goshen* to *Egypt*, wherein light was, when all else was in darknes. And indeed wherin doth the *Church* differ from other grounds, but that *Christ* hath taken it in ? It is the same soyle as other grounds are ; but he dresseth and fits it to beare spices and herbs.

2. In a garden nothing comes up naturally of it selfe, but as it is planted and set : so nothing is good in the heart, but as it is planted and set by the heavenly Husbandman. We need not sow the wildernes, for the seeds of weeds prosper naturally, the earth is a mother to weeds, but a step-mother

Ques.
Answ.

In what respects the Church is compared to a garden.

I.
Exod. 9. 26.

2.
Ioh. 15. 22.

mother to herbs. So weeds & passions grow too rank naturally, but nothing growes in the Church of it self, but as it is set by the hand of Christ, who is the Author, Dresser, and Pruner of his garden.

3. Againe, *in a garden nothing uses to be planted but what is usefull and delightfull*: so there is no grace in the heart of a Christian, but it is usefull (as occasion serves) both to God and man.

4. Further, *In a garden there are variety of flowers and splices*; especially in those hot countries: so in a Christian there is somewhat of every grace: as some cannot heare of a curious flower, but they will have it in their Garden: so a Christian cannot heare of any Grace, but he labours to obtain it, they labour for graces for all seasons and occasions. They have for *prosperity, temperance and sobriety*; for *adversity, patience, and hope to sustaine them*. For those that are *above them*, they have *respect and obedience*; and for those *under them*, *sutable usage* in all conditions of Christianity. For the Spirit of God in them is a seminary of spiritual good things; as in the corruption of nature, before the Spirit of God came to us, there was the seminary of all ill weeds in us: so when there is a new quality and new Principles put in us, therewith comes the seeds of all graces.

5. Againe, *Of all other places we most delight in our gardens to walke there, and take our pleasure, and take care therof, for fencing, weeding, watering, and planting*. So Christs chiefe care and delight is for his Church: he walks in the midst of the seven golden Candlestickes ; and if he defend and pro-

Simile.

Reason.

te & States, it is that they may be a harbour to his Church.

And then again, as in gardens there had wont to have fountains and streames which run through their gardens : as Paradise had foure streames which ran through it : So the Church is Christ's Paradise, and his Spirit is a spring in the midst of it, to refresh the soules of his upon all their faintings, and so the soule of a Christian becomes as a watered garden.

So also, their fountaines were sealed up : so the joyes of the Church and particular Christians, are as as it were sealed up. A stranger (it is said) shall not meddle with this joy of the Church.

Lastly, A garden stands always in need of weeding and dressing ; continual labour and cost must be bestowed upon it ; sometimes planting, pruning and weeding, &c. So in the Church and hearts of Christians, Christ hath always somewhat to do, we would else soon be over-grownne and turne wilde : In all which, and the like respects, Christ calleth upon the winds to blow upon his garden.

If then the Church be a severed portion, then, We should walke as men of a severed condition from the world, not as men of the world, but as Christians, to make good that we are so, by feeling the graces of Gods Spirit in some comfortable measure, that so Christ may have somthing in us, that he may delight to dwell with us, so to be subje^t to his pruning and dressing. For, It is so far from being an ill signe, that Christ is at cost with us, in following

6.

7.
Cant. 4. 12.

Prov. 14. 10.

8.

Use 1.

lowing us with affliction, that it is rather a sure signe of his love. For the care of this blessed Husbandman is to prune us so, as to make us fruitfull. Men care not for heath and wildernesse where-upon they bestow no cost: So when God prunes us by crosses and afflictions, and sowes good seed in us, it is a signe, he meanes to dwell with us, and delight in us.

2. And then also, we should not strive so much for common liberties of the world that common people delight in, but for peculiar graces, that God may delight in us as his *garden*.

3. And then let us learne hence, *not to despise any nation or person*, seeing God can take out of the wast wildernesse whom he will, and make the *Desart an Eden*.

4. Againe, let us blesse God for our selves, that our lot hath fallen into such a pleasant place, to be planted in the Church, the place of Gods delight.

5. And this also should move us to be fruitfull, for men will endure a fruitlesse tree in the wast wildernesse, but in their garden who will endure it? *Dignity should mind us of duty.* It is strange to be fruitlesse and barren in this place that we live in, being watered with the dew of Heaven, under the sweet influence of the meanes. This fruitlesse estate being often watered from Heaven, how fearefully is it threatened by the Holy Ghost? that *it is neare unto cursing and burning:* For in this case, visible Churches, if they prosper not, God will remove the hedge, and lay them wast, ha-
ving

ving a garden elsewhere. Sometimes Gods plants prosper better in Babylon, than in Iudea. It is to be feared God may complaine of us, as he doth of his people, *Ier. 2. 21.* *I have planted thee a noble vine, how art thou then come to be degenerated?* If in this case we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not regard the best thing that comes from us, as our prayers, *Heb. 12. 18. Heb. 13.* We must then learne of himselfe, how and wherein to please him. Obedience from a broken heart is the best sacrifice. Marke in Scriptures what he abhors, what he delights in : we use to say of our friends, would God I knew how to please them: Christ teacheth us, that *without faith it is impossible to please him.* Let us then strive and labour to be fruitfull in our *Places and Callings;* for it is the greatest honour in this world, for God to dignifie us with such a condition, as to make us fruitfull. *We must not bring forth fruit to our selves,* as God complaines of *Ephraim.* Honour, Riches, and the like, are but secondary things, arbitrary at Gods pleasure to cast in; but, *to have an active heart, fruitfull from this ground, that God hath planted us for this purpose,* that we may doe good to mankind, this is an excellent consideration not to prophane our calling. The blessed man is said to be, *a tree planted by the waters side, that brings forth fruit in due season;* but it is not every fruit, not that fruit which Moses complaines of, *Deut 32. 32.* *The wine of Dragons, and the gall of Aypes;* but good fruit, as John speaks, *Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewne down, and cast into the fire.*

Heb. 11. 6.

Hos. 10. 1.

Mat. 3. 10.

SERM. I.

6.

Zach. 2. 5.

Rev. 22. 1.

Lastly, in that the Church is called Christ's *garden*, this may strengthen our faith in God's care and protection. The Church may seeme to lie open to all incursions, but it hath an invisible hedge about it, a *wall* without it, and a *well* within it. God himselfe is a *wall* of fire about it, and his Spirit a well of living waters running through it to refresh and comfort it. As it was said of *Ca-naan*, so it may be said of the Church; *The eye of the Lord is upon it all the yeare long*, and he waters it continually. From which especiall care of God's over it, this is a good plea for us to God; *I am thine, save me*; I am a plant of thine owne setting, nothing is in me, but what is thine, therefore cherish what is thine: So for the whole Church, the plea is good; the Church is thine, fence it, water it, defend it, keep the wilde bore out of it. Therfore the enemies thereof shall one day know what it is to make a breach upon God's vineyard. In the meantime, let us labour to keep our hearts as a *garden*, that nothing that defileth may enter. In which respects the church is compared to a *garden*, upon which Christ commands the *North* and *South-wind* (all the means of Grace) to blow.

But to what end must these winds blow upon the Garden?

That the Spices thereof may flow out.

The end of this blowing is you see, *That the Spices thereof may flow out*; good things in us lie dead and bound up, unless the Spirit let them out. We ebbe and flow, open and shut, as the Spirit blowes upon us,

us, without blowing, no flowing. There were gracious good things in the Church, but they wanted blowing up and further spreading, whence we may observe, That,

We need not only grace to put life into us at the first, but likewise grace to quicken and draw forth that grace that we have. This is the difference betwixt mans blowing and the Spirits ; man when he blowes (if grace be not there before) spends all his labour upon a dead coale, which he cannot make take fire. But the Spirit first kindles a holy fire, and then increases the flame. Christ had in the use of meanes wrought on the Church before, and now further promoteth his own worke. We must first take in, and then send out ; first, be cisternes to containe; and then, conduits to convay. The wind first blowes, and then the Spices of the Church flow out, we are first sweet in our selves, and then sweet to others.

Whence we see further, That, it is not enough to be good in our selves, but our goodness must flow out; that is, grow more strong, usefull to continue and stremme forth for the good of others. We must labour to be (as was said of John) burning and shining Christians : for Christ is not like a boxe of oyntment shut up and not opened, but like that boxe of oyntment that Mary powred out, which perfumes all the whole house with the sweetnesse thereof : For the Spirit is herein like wind : it carries the sweet favour of grace to others. A Christian so soon as he finds any rooting in God, is of a spreading disposition, and

Observ.

Observ.

SERM. I.

Philem. 10.

makes the places he lives in the better for him. The whole body is the better for every good member; as we see in *Onesimus*. The meanest persons when they become good, are usefull and profitable; of briars become flowers; the very naming of a good man casts a sweet favour, as presenting some grace to the heart of the hearer. For, *then we have what we have to purpose; when others have occasion to blesse God for us, for conveying comfort to them by us.* And for our furtherance herein, therefore, the winds are called upon to awake and blow upon Christ's Garden.

That the Spices thereof may flow out.

Obseru.

Rev. 1.8.

Hence we see also, That, *Where once God begins, he goes on, and delights to adde encouragement to encouragement, to maintaine new setters up in Religion:* and doth not only give them a stock of grace at the beginning, but also helps them to trade; He is not only *Alpha*, but *Omega* unto them: *The Beginning and the Ending.* He doth not onely plant graces, but also watereth and cherisheth them; where the Spirit of Christ is, it is an encouraging Spirit: For not only it infuseth grace, but also stirs it up, that we may be ready prepared for every good worke, otherwisede we cannot doe that which we are able to doe, the Spirit must bring all into exercise, else the habits of grace will lie asleep; we need a present Spirit to doe every good: not only the power to will, but the will it selfe; and not only the will, but the deed is from the Spirit. Which should stir us up to goe to Christ, that he may stir up his owne graces in us, that they may flow out.

Let

Let us labour then in our selves to be full of goodness, that so we may be fitted to doe good to all : as God is good and does good to all, so must we strive to be as like him as may be. In which case for others sakes, we must pray, that God would make the *winds* to blow out fully upon us, *That our Spices may flow out* for their good. For a Christian in his right temper thinks, that he hath nothing good to purpose, but that which does good to others. Thus far of Christ's Command to the *North and South-wind to awake and blow upon his Garden, That the Spices thereof may flow out.* In the next place we have,

2. *Christ's Invitation by the Church is come into his Garden. With the End thereof, To eat his pleasant Fruits.*

Which words shew, *The Churches further desire of Christ's presence to delight in the graces of his own Spirit in her.* She invites him to come and take delight in the Graces of his owne Spirit. And she calls him *Beloved*, because all her love is, or should be imparted and spent on Christ, who gave himself to a cursed death for her. Our love should run in strength no other way, therfore the Church calls Christ her *Beloved*. Christ was there before, but she desires a further presence of him; whence we may observe; That,

Wheresoever grace is truly begun and stirred up, there is still a further desire of Christ's presence, and approaching daily more and more neare to the soule, the Church never thinks him near enough to her, untill she be in heaven with him. The

Observ.

S E R M . I .
Rev. 22. 17.

true Spouse and Bride alwayes (unlesse in desertion and temptation) cryeth, *Come Lord Jesus, Come quickly*. Now these degrees of Christs approaches to the soul untill his Second Comming are, That he may manifest him self more and more in defending , comforting and enabling his Church with Grace; every further manifestation of his presence, is a further Comming.

But why is the Church thus earnest ?

Reas. I.

First, because grace helps to see our need of Christ, and so helps us to prize him the more ; which high esteeme breeds an hungring earnest desire after him, and a desire of further likenesse and suitableness to him.

2.

Secondly, because the Church well knowes, That when Christ comes to the soule, he comes not alone, but with his Spirit, and his Spirit with abundance of peace and comfort. This shee knowes what need she hath of his Presence, that without him there is no comfortable living : For wheresoever he is, he makes the soule a kind of Heaven, and all conditions of life comfortable.

Use.

Hence we may see that those that do not desire the presence of Christ in his Ordinances, are (it is to be feared) such as the *wisd* of the Holy Ghost never blew upon. There are some of such a disposition, as they cannot endure the presence of Christ: such as Antichrist and his lims, whom the presence of Christ in his Ordinances blasts and consumes. Such are not onely prophane and worldly persons, but proud hypocrites, who glory in somthing of their owne, and therefore their hearts

hearts rise against Christ and his Ordinances, as laying open, and shewing their emptinesse and carnalnesse. The Spirit in the *Spose* is alwayes saying to Christ, *Come*. It hath never enough of him, he was now in a sort present : But the Church(after it is once blowne up) is not satisfied without a further presence. It is from the Spirit, that we desire more of the Spirit, and from the presence of Christ, that we desire a further Presence and Communion with him. Now,

The End and Reason why Christ is desired by the Church to come into his Garden, Is,

[*To eat his pleasant fruits.*] that is, to give him contentment. And is it not fit that Christ should eat the fruit of his owne vine, have comfort of his owne *Garden*, to taste of his owne fruits? The onely delight Christ hath in the world, is in his *Garden*; and that he might take the more delight in it, he makes it fruitfull, and those fruits are precious fruits, as growing from plants set by his owne hand, relishing of his owne Spirit, and so fitted for his tast. Now the Church knowing what fited Christ's tast best, and knowing the fruits of grace in her heart, desireth that Christ would delight in his own graces in her, and kindly accept of what she presented him with : Whence we see, That,

A gracious heart is privy to its owne grace and sincerity, when it is in a right temper : and so far as it is privy, is bold with Christ in a sweet and reverend manner. So much sincerity, so much confidence: If our heart condemne us not of unincerity, we

Observ.

may in a reverend manner speake boldly to Christ : It is not fit there should be strangenesse betwixt Christ and his Spouse; neither indeed will there be, when Christ hath blowne upon her, and when she is on the growing hand.

But marke the Ord. r.

First, Christ blowes, and then the Church sayes, *Come* : Christ begins in love, then love drawes love; Christ drawes the Church, and she runnes after him. *The fire of love meltis more then the fire of affliction.*

Againe, we may see here in the Church a carefullnesse to please Christ ; as it is the duty, so it is the disposition of the Church of Christ to please her Husband.

The Reason is, First, our happiness stands in his contentment, and all cannot but be well in that house, where the husband and the wife delight in, and make much of each other.

And again, after that the Church hath denied her selfe and the vanities of the world, entring into a way and course of mortification, whom else hath she to give her selfe to, or receive contentment from ? Our maner is to study to please men whom we hope to rise by, being carefull that all we doe may be well taken of them: as for Christ, we put him off with any thing : If he likes it, so it is ; if not, it is the best that he is like to have.

¶ let us take the Apostles counsell, *Coloff. I. 9.*
To labour to walke worthy of the Lord, &c. unto all well-pleasing, increasing in knowledge, and fruitfulness.

Cant. I 4.

Reason I :

2.

¶
 Col. I. 9,10.

nesse in every good worke. And this knowledge must not only be a generall wisedome in knowing truths, but a speciall understanding of his good will to us, and our speciall duties againe to him.

Againe, that we may please Christ the better, labour to be cleansed from that which is offensive to him : let the spring be cleane. Therefore the *Psalmist* desiring that the words of his mouth and the meditations of his heart might be acceptable before God, first begs *cleansing from his secret sins.*

And still we must remember, that he himselfe must worke in us, whatsoever is well-pleasing in his sight, that so we may be perfect in every good thing to doe his will, having grace whereby we may serve him acceptably. And one prevailing argument with him is, that we desire to be such as he may take delight in, *The upright are his delight.* It cannot but pleale him when we desire grace, for this end that we may please him. If we study to please men in whom there is but little good; should we not much more study to please Christ the fountain of goodness? Labour therefore to be spirituall ; for to be carnally minded is death, and those that are in the flesh cannot please God.

The Church desires Christ to come into his garden, to eat his pleasant fruits. Where we see, *The Church gives all to Christ :* The Garden is his, the Fruit his, the pleasantnesse and preciousnesse of the Fruit is his. And as the fruits please him, so the humble acknowledgment that they come from him,

Psal. 19.12.

3.

Rom. 8.6.

Observe.

SERM. I.

2 Chron.

Use.

him, doth exceedingly please him. It is enough for us to have the comfort, let him have the glory. It came from a good Spirit in *David*, when he said, *of thine owne Lord I give thee, &c.* God accounts the works and fruits that come from us to be ours, because the judgement and resolution of will, whereby we do them is ours. This he doth to encourage us ; but because the grace whereby we judge and will aright comes from God. It is our duty to ascribe whatsoever is good in us, or comes from us, unto him : so God shall lose no praise, and we lose no encouragement. The imperfections in well-doing are only ours, and those Christ will pardon, as knowing how to bear with the infirmities of his Spouse, being *the weaker vessel*.

This therefore should cheere up our spirits, in the wants and blemishes of our performances. They are notwithstanding, precious fruits in Christ's acceptance, so that we desire to please him above all things, and to have nearer communion with him : *fruitfulness unto pleasingness may stand with imperfections*, so that we be sensible of them, and ashamed for them. Although the fruit be little, yet it is precious, there is a blessing in it. Imperfections help us against temptations to pride, not to be matter of discouragement which Satan aims at. And as Christ commands the *North* and *South-wind* to blow for cherishing : so Satan labours to stir up an *East pinching wind*, to take either from endeavour, or to make us heart less in endeavour. Why should we think basely of

of that which Christ thinks precious ? Why should we thinke that offensive which he counts as incense? We must not give false witnesse of the worke of grace in our heartes, but blesse God that he will work any thing in such polluted hearts as ours. What though as they come from us, they have a relish of the old man, seeing he takes them from us, *and perfumes them with his owne sweet orders*, so presents them unto God. He is our *High-Priest*, which makes all acceptable, both *Persons, Prayers and Performances*, sprinkling them all with his bloud.

To conclude this Point, let it be our study to be in such a condition wherein we may please Christ; and whereas we are daily prone to offend him, let us daily renew our covenant with him, and in him ; and fetch encouragements of well-doing from this, that what we doe, is not onely well-pleasing unto him, but rewarded of him. And to this end desire him, that he would give command to *North* and *South*, to all sort of meanes, to be effectuall, for making us more fruitfull, that he may delight in us as his pleasant *Gardens*; and then what is in the world, that we need much care for, or feare ?

Now upon the *Churches Invitation for Christ* to come into his *Garden*, followes his gracious answer unto the *Churches Desire*, in the first verse of this fist Chapter.

C A N T . V . I .

*I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse,
I have gathered my myrrhe with my spice: I have ea-
ten*

Rev. 8, 3.

Heb. 9, 13.

ten my honey-combe with my honey: I have drunk my wine with my milke; eat O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.

Which words containe in them,

An answer to the Desire of the Church, in the latter part of the verse formerly handled: Awake thou North-wind, and come thou South, &c.

Then *Vers. 2.* is set forth, *The secure estate of the Church at this time, I sleep, but my heart waketh, in setting downe whereof, the Holy-Ghost here by Solomon shewes likewise,*

The loving Intercourse betwixt Christ and the Church one with another.

Now Christ upon the secure estate and condition of the Church desires her, *To open unto him, Ver. 2.* Which desire and waiting of Christ is put off and slighted with poore and slender excuses, *Ver. 3. I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on, &c.*

The successe of which excuses is, that Christ seemes to goe away from her (and indeed to her sight and sense departs) *Ver. 6. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himselfe, &c.* Whereupon she layes about her, is restlesse, and enquires after Christ from the watchmen, who misuse, wound her, and take away her vaille from her, *Ver. 7.*

Another Intercourse in this Chapter here is, That *the Church for all this gives not over searching after Christ: But asks the Daughters of Ierusalem, what was become of her Beloved, Ver. 8. and withall in a few words, but full of large expression,*

sion, she relates her case unto them, That she was sicke of love ; and so chargeith them to tell her Beloved, if they find him. Wherupon a question is moved by them, touching her Beloved. Ver. 9. What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved ? She takes occasion (being full of love) which is glad of all occasions to speak of her Beloved, to burst forth into his Praises, by many elegant Expressions, Ver. 10, 11, 12, &c.

1. In generall, setting him at a large distance, beyond comparison from all others, to be The chiefest of ten thousand, Ver. 10.
2. In particular, Ver. 11. &c. His head is as most fine gold, &c.

The Issue whereof was, That the Daughters of Jerusalem became likewise enamoured with him, Chap. 6. 1. and thereupon also enquire after him: Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women, &c. Unto which demand the Church makes answer, Chap. 6. 2. and so Ver. 3. of that Chapter, makes a confident triumphant close unto all these grand passages forenamed. *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, &c.* all which will better appeare in the particulars themselves.

The first thing then which offereth it selfe to our consideration is, Christ's answer to the Churches Invitation, Chap. 4. 16.

I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse, I have gathered my myrrhe with my spice; I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey; I have drunke my wine with my milke; Eat O friends, drinke, yea drink abundantly O beloved. In which verse we have,

SERM. I.

1. Christ's answer to the Churches petition [*I am come into my Garden*]
2. A Compellation, or Description of the Church [*My Sister, my Spouse.*]
3. Christ's acceptation of what he had gotten there, [*I have gathered my myrrhe with my spice; I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey.*]
4. There is an invitation of all Christ's friends to a magnifique abundant feast, [*Eat O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved.*]

For the first then, in that Christ makes such a reall answer unto the Churches Invitation, *I am come into my Garden*, &c. We see, That Christ comes into his garden. 'Tis much that he that hath heaven to delight in, will delight to dwel among the sons of sinfull men; but this he doth for us, and so takes notice of the Churches Petition.

Let my Beloved come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruit. The right speech of the Church that gives all to Christ, who when she hath made such a Petition, heares it. The Order is this.

First of all. God makes his Church lovely, planteth good things therein, and then stirs up in her good desires; both fitnesse to pray from an inward gracious disposition, and holy desires : after which, Christ hearing the voice of his owne Spirit in her, and regarding his owne preparations, he answers them graciously. Whence, in the first place we may observe, That,

God makes us good, stirres up holy desires in us, and

*The Order of
Gods bearing
his Church.*

Observ.

and then answers the desires of his holy Spirit in us.

A notable place we have for this, *Psal. 10.17.* which shewes how God first prepares the heart to pray, and then heares these desires of the soule stirred up by his owne Spirit, *Lord, thou hast heard the desires of the humble;* none are fit to pray but the humble, such as discerne their owne wants: *Thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt make thine eare to heare.* *So Rom. 8.26.* It is said, *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities;* for, we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit it selfe maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered. Thus the Spirit not onely stirres up our heart to pray; but also prepares our hearts unto it. Especially, this is necessary for us, when our thoughts are confused with trouble, griefe, and Passions, not knowing what to pray. In this case the Spirit dictates the words of prayer, or else, in a confusion of thoughts sums up all in a volie of sighes and unexpressible groanes. Thus it is true, that our hearts can neither be lifted up to Prayer, nor rightly prepared for it, in any frame fiting, but by Godsowne Spirit. Nothing is accepted of God toward heaven & happines, but that which is spirituall; all saving and sanctifying good comes from above. Therefore God must prepare the heart, stirre up holy desires, dictate prayer: must doe all inall, being our *Alpha* and *Omega.*

Now, God heares our prayers. First, because the Materials of these holy desires are good in themselves, and from the Person from whence they come, his Beloved

S E V M. I.
*How the heart
is prepared to
prayer.*

Rev. 1.6.

*Why God
heares our
prayers.*

Reason 1.

SERM. I.

ved Spouse, as it is, Cant. 2. 14. where Christ desiring to heare the voice of his Church, saith, Let me see thy countenance, and let me heare thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. Thus the voice of the Spouse is sweet, because it is stirred up by his owne Spirit, which burnes the Incense, and whence all comes which is savingly good. This offering up of our prayers in the name of Christ, is that which with his sweet odors perfumes all our Sacrifices and Prayers, because being in the Covenant of Grace, God respects whatsoever comes from us, as we doe the desires of our near friends.

2.

And then againe, God heares our Prayers, Because he looks upon us as we are in election and choice of God the Father who hath given us to him. Not only as in the neare bond of marriage, husband and wife; but also as he hath given us to Christ, which is his plea unto the Father, *Ioh. 17. 6. Thine they were, thou gavest them me, &c.* The desires of the Church please him, because they are stirred up by his Spirit, and proceed from her that is his: whose voice he delights to heare, and the prayers of others for his Church are accepted, because they are for her that is his Beloved.

To confirme this further, see *Isa. 58. 9. Then then shalt cry, and the Lord shall answer; then shalt call, and presently he shall say, Here I am, &c.* So as soone as Daniel had ended that excellent prayer, the Angell telleth him, *At the beginning of thy supplications the decree came forth, &c.* So because he knows what to put into our hearts, he knowes

Rev. 8.3.

Dan 9.23.

OUR

our desires and thoughts. And therefore accepts of our prayers and heares us; because he loveth the voice of his owne Spirit in us. So it is said, *He fulfills the desires of them that feare him; and he is neare to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth.* And our Saviour he saith, *Aske and ye shall receive, &c.* So we have it, *I Joh. 5.14.* *And we know if we aske any thing according to his will, he heareth us.*

Let it therefore be a singular comfort to us, that in all wants, so in that of friends, when we have none to go to, yet we have God to whom we may freely powre out our hearts, there being no place in the world that can restraine us from his presence, or his Spirit from us, he can heare us and help us in all places. What a blessed estate is this? None can hinder us from driving this trade with Christ in heaven.

And let us make another use of it likewise, to be a means to stirre up our hearts, *to make use of our privileges.* What a prerogative is it for a favouriteto have the Eare of his Prince, him we account happy: surely he is much more happy, that hath Gods eare, him to be his Father in the covenant of grace: Him reconciled, upon all occasions to powre out his heart before Him, who is mercifull and faithfull, wise and most able to help us. *Why are we discouraged therefore? and why are we cast downe?* when we have such a powerfull, and such a gracious God to goe to in all our extremities. He that can pray, can never be much uncomfortable.

Cant. 2.14.

Psal. 145.18.

Mat. 7.7.

Use 1.

Use 2.

Psal. 42 ult.

SERM. I.

Use 3.

*The greatest
lose of all.**Cases wherein
one is unfit to
pray.*

I.

*A strong mo-
tive to sanctifi-
cation.*

So likewise, it should stirre us up to keep our peace with God, that so we may always have access unto him, and communion with him. What a pitifull case is it to lose other comforts, and therewith also to be in such a state, that we cannot goe to God with any boldnesse ? It is the greatest losse of all, when we have lost the spirit of Prayer. For if we lose other things, we may recover them by Prayer. But when we have lost this boldnesse to goe to God , and are afraid to looke him in the face (as malefactors the Judge) this is a wofull estate.

Now there are diverse cases wherein the soule is not in a state fit for Prayer. As that first, Psal. 66. 18. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not regard my Prayer.* If a man hath a naughty heart, that purpoleth to live in any sinne against God, he takes him for an enemy, and therefore will not regard his Prayer. Therefore we must come with a resolute purpose, to break off all sinfull courses, and to give up our selves to the guidance of Gods Spirit. And this will be a forcible reason to move us therunto, because so long as we live in any knowne sin unrepented of, God neither regards us nor our prayers. What a fearfull estate is this, that when we have such need of Gods favour in all estates ; in sicknesse, the hour of death, and in spirituall temptation, to be in such a condition, as that we dare not go to God? Though our lives be civill, yet if we have false hearts that feed themselves with evill imaginations, and with a purpose of sinning (though we

act

act it not) the Lord will not regard the prayers of such an one, they are abominable (*The very sacrifice of the wicked is abominable.*)

Another case is, when we will not forgive others. We know it is directly set downe in the Lords Prayer. *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;* and there is further added, Ver. 15. *If you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.* If our hearts tell us we have no disposition to pardon, be at peace and agreement, then we doe but take Gods Name in vaine, when we ask him to forgive our sins, and we continue in envy and malice. In this case God wil not regard our prayers, as it is said; *I care not for your Prayers, or for any service you performe to me: why? For your hands are full of bloud:* you are unmercifull, of a cruell fierce disposition, which cannot appeare before God rightly, nor humble it selfe in prayer: If it doth, its owne bloudy and cruell disposition will be objected against the prayers, which are not mingled with *faith and love,* but with *wrath and bitternesse.* Shall I look for mercy that have no mercifull heart my selfe? Can I hope to find that of God, that others cannot finde from me? An unbroken disposition which counts *Pride* an ornament, that is cruell and fierce, it cannot goe to God in prayer: For whosoever would prevale with God in prayer, must be humble; for *our supplications must come from a loving peaceable disposition where there is a resolution against all sin.* Neither is it sufficient to avoid grudging and

SERM. I.

malice against these; but we must look that others have not cause to grudge against us, as it is commanded, Mat. 5.23. If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remembrest that thy Brother hath ought against thee: leave there thy gift before the altar, and goe thy way ; first be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy gift. So that if we do not seek reconciliation with men unto whom we have done wrong, God will not be reconciled to us, nor accept any service from us.

If then we would have our prayers, and our Persons accepted, or respected, let us make conscience of that which hath bin said, and not lose such a blessed priviledge as this is, that God may regard our prayers. But here may be asked,

How shall I know whether God regard my prayers or not ?

First, When he grants the thing prayed for, er enlargeth our hearts to pray still. It is a greater gift then the thing it selfe we beg, to have a spirit of prayer with a heart enlarged: For as long as the heart is enlarged to prayer, it is a signe, that God hath a speciall regard of us, and will grant our petition in the best and fittest time.

When he answers us in a better and higher kind, as Paul when he prayed for the taking away of the Prick of the flesh, had promises of sufficient grace.

When againe, He gives us inward peace, though he gives not the thing : as Phil. 4.7. In nothing be carefull, but in all things let your requests be made to God, with prayer and thanksgiving.

But

Quest.

Answ. I.

2.

How to know
when God
heares our
prayers.

3.

4.

S E R M . I.
Quest.
Ans'r.

But sometimes he doth not answer our requests.

It is true he doth not, but the peace of God which passeth all understanding guards our hearts & minds in the knowledge and love of God. So though he answers not our prayers in particular; yet he vouchsafes inward peace unto us, assuring us that it shall go well with us, though not in that particular we beg. And thus in not hearing their prayers, yet they have their hearts desire, when Gods will is made knowne. Is not this sufficient for a Christian, either to have the thing, or to have inward peace, with assurance that it shall goe better with them, then if they had it ; with a spirit enlarged to pray, till they havethe thing prayed for ? If any of these be, God respects our prayers.

Again, in that Christ is thus ready to come unto his Garden upon the Churches Invitation, we may further observe, That,

Christ vouchsafes his gracious Presence to his children upon their desire of it.

Observ.

The point is cleare, from the beginning of the world, the Church hath had the presence of Christ alway: For, either he hath been present in Sacrifices, or in some other things, signes of his presence, as in the Bush, or some more glorious manifestation of his presence, the Arke, and in the Cloud, and Pillar of fire, and after that more gloriously in the Temple : he hath ever been present with his Church in some signe or evidence of his presence, he delighted to be with the children of men. Sometimes before that, sometimes he assumed a body, and afterward laid it downe

Exod. 3. 2.
Exod. 25. 22.
Exod. 13. 21.

S B R M. I.

Psal. 65. 2.

againe untill he came indeed to take our nature upon him never to leave it againe. But here is meant, *a spirituall presence most of all*; which the Church in some sort ever had: now desires, and he offers, as being *a God hearing prayer*. And to instance in one place for all, to see how ready Christ hath alwaies been to shew his presence to the Church upon their desire. What else is the *burden* of the 107. *Psalme*, but a repetition of Gods readinesse to shew his presence in the Church, upon their seeking unto him, and unfained desire of it, notwithstanding all their manifold provocations of him to anger, which is well summed up, *Psal. 106. 43.* *Many times did he deliver them, but they provoked him with their counsell, and were brought low for their iniquity.* Nevertheless, he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry.

That the Church is carried from desire to desire,

It doth not content the Church to have a kind of spirituall presence of Christ; but, *it is carried from desire to desire*, til the whole desire be accomplished: For, *as there are graduall presences of Christ, so there are suitable desires in the Church which rise by degrees.* Christ was present, 1. by his gracious Spirit. And then, 2. more graciously present in his *Incarnation*, the sweetest time that ever the Church had from the beginning of the world untill then. It being *the desire of nations*; for the description of those who lived before his coming, is from *the waiting for the consolation of Israel*, that is, for the first comming of Christ. And then there is a third and more glorious presence of Christ, that all of us wait for, whereby we are described

described to be such, as wait for the comming of Christ ; for the soule of a Christian is never satisfied untill it enjoy the highest desire of Christ's presence, which the Church knew well enough must follow in time. Therefore she especially desires this spirituall presence in a larger and fuller measure, which she in some measure already had. So then Christ is graciously present in his Church, by his holy Spirit. *I will be with you (faith he) unto the end of the world.* It is his promise, when I am gone my selfe ; *I will not leave you comfortlesse,* but leave with you my *Vicar-Generall*(the Holy Spirit, the *Comforter*) who shall be alway with you. But,

How shall we know that Christ is present in us ?

To know this, we shall not need to pull him from heaven, we may know it in the *Word* and *Sacraments*, and in the *Communion of Saints* ; for these are the conveyances whereby he manifests himself, together with the worke of his own gracious Spirit in us ; for as we need not take the *Sun* from Heaven to know whether or not it be up, or be day, which may be known by the light, heat, and fruitfulness of the creature : And as in the *Spring*, we need not look to the Heaven to see whether the *Sun* be come near us or not ; for looking on the *Earth*, we may see all green, fresh, lively, strong and vigorous. So it is with the presence of Christ, we may know he is present, by that light which is in the soule, convincing us of better courses to be taken of a spirituall life, to know heavenly things, and the difference of

Mat. 28.

John 16.

Quest.

Ans W. I.
How to know
that Christ is
present in us.

SERM. I.

them from earthly, and to set a price upon them. When there is together with *light*, a heat above nature. The affections are kindled to love the best things, and to joy in them.

And when together with *heat* there is *strength* and *vigor* to carry us to *spirituall duties*, framing us to a holy communion with God, and one with another.

And likewise, when there is every way cheerfulness and enlargement of *Spirit*; as it is with the creature when the *Sun approacheth*. For these causes the Church desires Christ, that she may have more light, life, heate, vigor, strength, and that she may be more cheerfull and fruitfull in duties. The soule when it is once made spirituall, doth still desire a further and further presence of Christ, to be made better and better.

What a comfort is this to Christians, that they have the presence of Christ so far forth, as shall make them happy, and as the earth will afford. *Nothing but Heaven* (or rather *Christ in Heaven*) it selfe, will content the childe of God. In the meane time his presence in the Congregation, makes their soules (as it were) Heaven. If the Kings presence, who carries the Court with him, makes all places where he is a Court: So Christ he carries a kinde of heaven with him; wheresoever he is, his presence bath with it, life, light, comfort, strength and all. For one beame of his countenance will scatter all the clonds of grieve whatsoever. It is no matter where we be, so Christ be with us. If with the three children in a fiery furnace,

*That where
Christ is pre-
sent, there Hea-
ven is in some
degrees.*

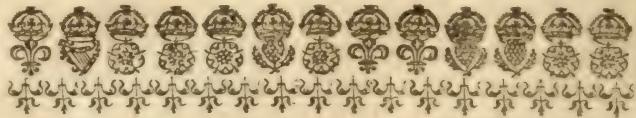
Dan. 3.

Act. 15.52.

nace, it is no matter, if a fourth be there also. So, if Christ be with us, the flames nor nothing shall hurt us. If in a dungeon, as Paul and *Sylas* were; If Christ's presence be there by his Spirit to enlarge our soules, all is comfortable what soever. It changeth the nature of all things, sweetneth every thing, besides that sweetnesse which it brings unto the soule, by the presence of the Spirit, as we see in the *Acts*, when they had received the Holy-Ghost more abundantly, they cared not what they suffered, regarded not whipping; nay, were glad that they were accounted worthy to suffer any thing for Christ. Whence came this fortitude? from the presence of Christ, and the *Comforter* which he had formerly promised?

So let us have the Spirit of Christ that comes from him, then it is no matter what our condition be in the world: upon this ground let us feare nothing that shall befall us in Gods cause, whatsoever it is. We shall have a spirit of prayer at the worst. God never takes away the spirit of Supplication from his children, but leaves them that, untill at length he posesse them fully of their desires. In all Christ's delays, let us looke unto the Cause, and to our Carriage therein: Renew our Repentance, that we may be in a fit state to goe to God, and God to come to us. Desire him to fit us for prayer and holy communion with him, that we may never doubr of his presence.

That having
Christ's pre-
sence, we need
feare nothing.



The second Sermon.

C A N T . V . I .

I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse : I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice : I have gathered my honey-combe with my honey : I have drunke my wine with my milke : Eat O friends, drinke, yea drinke abundantly, O beloved!



His song is a mirror of Christ's love, A discovery of which we have in part in this verse. Wherein Christ accepts of the invitation of the Church, and comes into his Garden ; and he entertaines her with the termes of *Sister* and *Spouse*. Herein observe the description of the Church, and the sweet Compellation [*My Sister, my Spouse.*] Where there is both affinity and consanguinity, all the bonds that may tye us to Christ, and Christ to us.

1. *His Sister, by bloud.*

2. *His Spouse, by Marriage.*

Christ is our Brother, and the Church and every particular true member thereof is *his sister*. I goe (saith Christ) To my Father and to your Father, to my God, and to your God. Goe (saith he) and tell

tell my Brethren; this was after his resurrection, his advancement did not change his disposition. Go tell my brethren that left me so unkindly; go tell Peter that was most unkind of all, and most cast downe with the sense of it. He became our Brother by Incarnation : For, all our union is from the first union of two natures in one person. Christ became bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh; to make us spiritually bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh.

Therefore, let us labour to be like to him, who for that purpose became like to us, Immanuell, God with us, that we might be like him, and partake of the divine Nature. Whom should we rather desire to be like then one so great, so gracious, so loving?

Againe, Christ was not ashamed to call us Brethren, nor abhorred the Virgins wombe, to be shut up in those darke cels and straits; but tooke our base nature, when it was at the worst, and not only our nature, but our miserable condition and curse due unto us. Was not he ashamed of us, and shall we be ashamed to owne him and his cause? Against this Cowardise it is a thunderbolt, which our Saviour Christ pronounceth: *He that is ashamed of me before men, him will I be ashamed of before my Father, and all the holy Angels.* It argues a base disposition, either for frowne or favour to desert a good cause in evill times.

Againe, *It is a point of comfort to know that we have a Brother, who is a favourite in Heaven,* who though he abased himselfe for us, is yet Lord over

*Isa. 7. 14.
2 Pet. 1. 4.*

Mark, 8. 38.

SERM. II.

over all. Unless he had been our brother, he could not have been our Husband ; for Husband and Wife should be of one nature. That he might marry us. Therefore he came, and tooke our nature, so to be fitted to fulfill the worke of our Redemption. But now he is in Heaven, set down at the right hand of God : the true *Iosephk*, the high Steward of Heaven, he hath all power committed unto him, he rules all. What a comfort is this to a poore soul that hath no friends in the world, that yet he hath a friend in Heaven, that will owne him for his Brother, in, and through whom he may goe to the Throne of Grace boldly, and powre out his soule. What a comfort was it to *Iosephs* brethren, that their brother was the second person in the kingdome ?

Againe, It should be a Motive to have good Christians in high estimation, and to take heed how we wrong them, for their Brother will take their part. Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? faith the head in Heaven, when his members were troden on upon earth. It is more to wrong a Christian, then the world takes it for ; for Christ takes it as done to himselfe. *Absolom* was a man wicked and unnatural, yet he could not endure the wrong that was done to his sister *Thamar*. *Jacobs* sons tooke it as high indignity, that their sister should be so abused. Hath Christ no affections now he is in Heaven, to her that is so near him as the Church is ? howsoever he suffer men to tyrannize over her for awhile, yet it will appeare ere long, that he will take the Churches part, for he is our Brother.

Heb. 4. 15, 16.

Act. 9. 4.

My

My Sister, my Spouse.

The Church is the Daughter of a King, begotten of God, the Sister, and Spouse of a King, because she is the Sister, and Spouse of Christ, and the Mother of all that are spirituall Kings ; the Church of Christ is every way Royall. Therefore, we are Kings, because we are Christians. Hence the Holy-Ghost doth add here to Sister, Spouse: indeed taking the advantage of such Relations as are most comfortable to set out the excellent and transcendent Relation that is between Christ and his Church, all other are not what they are termed so much, as glasses to see better things. Riches, Beanty, Marriage, Nobility, &c. are scarce worthy of their names ; these are but Titles, and empty things, though our base nature make great matters of them; yet the reality and substance of all these are in heavenly things. True Riches are the heavenly Graces ; true Nobility is to be borne of God, to be the Sister and Spouse of Christ. True pleasures are those of the Spirit, which endure for ever, and will stand by us, when all outward comforts will vanish. That mysticall union and sweet communion is set down with such variety of expressions, to shew, that whatsoever is scattered in the creature severally, is in him intirely. He is both a Friend, and a Brother, a Head, and a Husband to us, therefore he takes the names of all ; whence we may observe further,

That, the Church is the Spouse of Christ. It springs out of him, even as Eve taken out of Adams Rib; (so the Spouse of Christ) was taken out

Why the vari-
ety of Christs
love to the
Church is so di-
verely expres-
sed.

Observ.

SERM. II.

Act. 20.28.

How Christ
must be taken
of us.

1.

2.

Rev. 1.5,6.

out of his side (when it was pierced) the Church rose out of his bloud and death; for he redeemed it, by satisfying divine justice: we being in such a condition, that Christ must redeem us, before he could wed us. First, he must be incarnate in our Nature, before he could be a fit husband; and then, because we were in bondage and captivity, we must be redeemed before he could marry us: *he purchased his Church with his own bloud.* Christ hath right to us, he bought us dearly.

Againe, another foundation of this Marriage between Christ and us, is Consent; he workes us by his Spirit to yeeld to him, there must be consent on our part, which is not in us by nature, but wrought by his spirit, &c. We yeeld to take him upon his owne tearmes; that is, that we shall leave our fathers house, all our former carnall acquaintance: when he hath wrought our consent, then the marriage between him and us is strooke up.

Some few resemblances will make the consideration of this the more comfortable. 1. *The Husband takes his wife under his owne name,* she loosing her owne name is called by his. So we are called Christians of Christ. 2. *The Wife is taken with all her debt, and made partakers of the Honours, and Riches of her Husband.* Whatsoever he hath is hers, and he stands answerable for all her debts: so it is here, we have not only the name of Christ upon us, but we partake of his honors, and are Kings, Priests, and Heires with him. Whatsoever he hath, he hath taken us into the fellowship of it; so that his Riches are ours, and likewise, what-

whatsoever is ours, that is ill, he hath taken it up on him, even the wrath due to us; for he came between that and us, when he was made sin, and a curse for us: so there is a blessed change between Christ and us; his Honours and Riches are ours: We have nothing to bestow on him, but our beggary, sinnes, and miseries, which he tooke upon him.

*Those that bring together these two different parties, are the friends of the Bride; that is, the Ministers, as it is, John 3.23. They are the paranymphi, the friends of the Bride, that learne of Christ what to report to his Spouse; and so they woee for Christ, and open the Riches, Beauty, Honor, and all that is lovely in him, which is indeed the especiall duty of Ministers, to lay open his unsearchable Riches, that the Church may know what a husband she is like to have, if she cleave to him; and what an one she leaves, if she forsake him. It was well said in the Councell of Basil out of Bernard, *Nemo committit Sponsam suam Vicario; nemo enim Ecclesia Sponsus est:* None commits his wife to a Vicar, for none is the Husband of the Church. To be Husband of the Church is one of the incommunicable Titles of Christ, yet usurped by the Pope. *Innocent the third was the first that wronged Christ's bed by challenging the Title of Sponsus, Husband of the Church.* Bernard forbids his scholler Eugenius this title, *Epiſt. 237. ad Eugenium.* It is enough for Ministers to be friends of the Bride. Let us yeeld him to be Husband of the Church, that hath given him-*

2 Cor. 5.21.

3.

*The duty of
Ministers.*

SERM. II.

himselfe to sanctifie it with washing of water and bloud, *Eph. 5.26.* we are a wife of bloud to him.

In this sweet Conjunction, we must know, that by nature we are cleane otherwi se then Spouses ; for what was Solomons wife, Pharaohs daughter ? a Heathen til she came to be Solomons Spouse. And as we read in *Moses*, the strange woman must have her haire cut off, and her nailes pared, before she should be taken into the Church, there must be an alteration: so before the Church (which is not Heathenish, but indeed Hellish by nature, and led by the spirit of the world) be fit to be the Spouse of Christ, there must be an alteration and a change of nature ; Christ must alter, renew, purge, and fit us for himselfe ; the Apostle saith, *Eph. 5.16.* It was the end of his death, not onely to take us to Heaven, but to sanctifie us on earth, and prepare us that we might be fit Spouses for himselfe.

*Isa. 11.7, 8.
John 3.3.*

*Use I.
Consolation.*

*Vxor i lis non
intenditur.*

Let us oft thinke of this nearnesse between Christ and us (if we have once given our names to him) and not be discouraged for any sin or unworthinesse in us. Who sues for a debt when she is married ? Therefore answer all accusations thus : Goe to Christ; if you have any thing to say to me, goe to my husband; God is just, but he will not have his justice twice satisfied, seeing whatsoever is due thereunto is satisfied by Christ our Husband ? What a comfort is this to a distressed conscience; if sinne cannot dismay us, which is the ill of ills and cause of all evill, what other ill can dismay us ? He that exhorts us to beare with the infirmities

one

one of another, and hath enjoyned the husband to beare with the wife (*as the weaker vefsell*) will not he beare with his Church(*as the weaker vefsell*) performing the duty of an husband in all our infirmities ?

Againe, His desire is to make her better, and not to cast her away for that which is amisse. And for *Outward ills*, they are but to refine, and make us more conformable to Christ our Husband, to fit us for heaven, the same way that he went. *They have a blessing in them all*, for he takes away all that is hurtfull, he pitties, and keeps us *as the apple of his eye*. Therefore, let us often thinke of this, since he hath vouchsafed to take us so near to himselfe. Let us not lose the comfort that this meditation will yeeld us. We love for goodnessse, beauty, riches, but Christ loves us to make us so, and then loves us because we are so in all estates whatsoever.

Zach. 2.8.

And if Christ be so near us, let us labour for chaste judgements, that we doe not defile them with errors, seeing the whole soule is espoused to Christ. Truth is the Spouse of our understandings; it is not left to us to be wanton in opinions, to take up what conceit we will of things: so we ought to have chaste affections, not cleaving to base things: It hath been oft times seen that one husband hath had many wives, but never from the beginning of the world, that one wife hath had many husbands. God promiseth to betroth his Church to him in righteousness and faithfulness; that is, as he will be faithfull to

Use 3.

*Veritas est
pons a intel-
lectu.*

SERM. II.

That our affections are like their objects.

so she shall by his grace be faithfull to him, faithfulness shall be mutuall, the Church shall not be false to Christ: so there is no Christian soule must thinke to have many husbands; for Christ in this case is a jealous husband. Take heed therefore of spirituall harlotry of heart, for our affections are for Christ, and cannot be better bestowed. In other things we lose our love, and the things loved; but here we lose not our love; but this is a perfecting love, which drawes us to love that which is better then our selves. We are as we affect, our affections are as their Objects be: If they be set upon better things then our selves, they are bettered by it, they are never rightly bestowed but when they are set upon Christ; and upon other things as they answer and stand with the love of Christ. For, the prime love, when it is rightly bestowed, it orders, and regulates all other loves whatsoever. No man knowes how to use earthly things, but a Christian that hath first pitched his love on Christ, then seeing all things in him, and in all them a beame of that love of his, intending happiness to him, so he knowes how to use every thing in order. Therefore let us keep our Communion with Christ, and esteem nothing more then his love, because he esteemes nothing more then ours.

Quest.

But how shall we know whether we be espoused to Christ or not?

*AnsW.I.
How to know if
we be espoused
to Christ or not.*

Our hearts can tell us, whether we yeeld consent to him or not. In particular, whether we have received him as he will be received, as a right

right husband ; that is, *Whether we receive him to be ruled by him*, to make him our Head. For the wife when she yeelds to be married, therewith also surrenders up her owne will to be ruled by her husband; so far she hath denied her own will, she hath no will of her owne. Christ hath wisedome enough for us, and himselfe too, whose wisedome and will must be ours : *To be led by divine Truths so far as they are discovered unto us, and to submit our selves thereunto, is a signe of a gracious heart that is married to Christ.*

Againe, *a willingnesse to follow Christ in all conditions as he is discovered in the Word.* To suffer Christ to have the soveraignty in our affections, above all other things and persons in the world. This is the right disposition of a true Spouse. For as it was at the first institution, *there must be a leaving of Father and Mother, and all to cleave to the husband:* so here, when any thing and Christ cannot stand together, or else we shall never have the comfort of this sweet Name. Many men will be glad to own Christ to be great by him ; (but as Saint Austin complaines in his time) Christ Iesus is not loved for Iesus his own sake, but for other things that he brings with him, *peace, plenty, &c.* as farre as it stands with these contentments ; if Christ and the world part once, it will be known which we followed. In times of peace this is hardly discerned. If he will pay mens debts, so as they may have the credit and glory of the Name to be called Christians : If he will redeeme them from the danger of sinall is well ; but onely such

2.
The right dis-
position of the
spouse of Christ

Vix diligitur
Iesus propter
Iesum.

SERM. II.

have the comfort of this Communion, as love him for himselfe. Let us not so much trouble ourselves about signes, as be carefull to doe our duty to Christ, and then will Christ discover his love clearly unto us.

Use 4.
Encouragement
and direction
for such as are
not yet in
Christ.

Now they that are not brought so near to this happy condition by Christ, may yet have this encouragement ; there is yet place of grace for them, let them therefore consider but these three things :

1. *The excellency of Christ, and of the state of the Church, when it is so near him.*
2. *The necessity of this to be so near him.*
3. *That there is hope of it.*

There is in Christ whatsoever may commend a Husband, birth, comeliness, riches, friends, wisedome, authority, &c.

1. *The excellency of this condition to be one with Christ, is that all things are ours. For he is the King, and the Church, the Queene of all ; all things are serviceable to us: it is a wondrous nearnesse to be nearer to Christ then the Angels, who are not his body, but servants that attend upon the Church: the Bride is nearer to him then the Angels; for he is the Head and Husband thereof, and not of the Angels. What an excellent condition is this for poore flesh and bloud that creeps up and downe the earth here despised ?*

2. *But especially, If we consider the Necessity of it, we are all indebted for more then we are worth; to divine justice we owe a debt of obedience, and in want of that we owe a debt of punishment and*

Heb. 2. 16.

we

we cannot answer one for a thousand. What will become of us if we have not a husband to discharge all our debts but to be imprisoned for ever?

A person that is a stranger to Christ, though he were an *Achitophel* for his braine, a *Iudas* for his profession, a *Saul* for his place : yet if his sins be set before him, he will be swallowed up of despaire, fearing to be shut up eternally under Gods wrath; therefore if nothing else move, yet let necessity compell us to take Christ.

Consider not onely how suitable and how necessary he is unto us, but what hope there is to have him, when as he sueth to us by his messengers, and woeth us, when as we should rather seeke to him, and with other messengers sendeth a privy messenger, his Holy Spirit, to encline our hearts ; let us therefore as we love our soules, suffer our selves to be won. But more of this in another place. The next Branch is,

3. *Christ's acceptance, I have gathered my myrrh with my Spice, &c.* So that together with Christ's presence, here is a gracious acceptance of the provision of the Church, with a delight in it; and with all, a bringing of more with Him. The Church had a double desire : 1. That Christ would come to accept of what she had for him of his owne Grace which he had wrought in her soule. And 2. She was also verily perswaded that he would not come empty handed, only to accept of what was there, but also would bring abundance of Grace and comfort with him. Therefore, she desires

Christ's acceptation.

SERM. II.

sires Acceptation and Increase: both which desires he answers. He comes to his *Garden*, shewes his acceptance, and withall he brings more. *I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice : I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey : I have drunke my wine with my milke, &c.* Whence we observe,

Obseru.

That God accepts of the Graces of his children, and delights in them.

1.

First, Because they are the fruits that come from his Children, his Spouse, his friend; love of the person wins acceptance of that which is presented from the person. What comes from love is lovingly taken.

2.

They are the Graces of his Spirit. If we have any thing that is good, all comes from the Spirit, which is first in Christ our husband, and then in us. As the Oyntment was first powred on *Aarons* head, and then ran downe upon hir rich Garments: so all comes from Christ to us. Saint Paul calls the wife *the Glory of her Husband*, because (as in a glasse) she resembleth the Graces of her husband, who may see his owne Graces in her: so it is with Christ and the Church; face answereth to face (as Solomon saith in another case) Christ sees his owne face, beauty, glory in his Church, she reflects his beames, he lookes in love upon her, and alwaies with his looks conveys Grace and comfort; and the Church doth reflect back again his Grace. Therefore Christ loves but the reflection of his owne Graces in his Children, and therefore accepts them.

Psal. 133.

3. His kindnesse is such as he takes all in good part,

part, Christ is love and kindness it selfe. Why doth he give unto her the name of *Spouse* and *Sister*? but that he would be kind, and loving, and that we should conceive so of him. We see then the Graces of Christ accepting of us, and what we doe in his strength. Both we our selves are sacrifices, and what we offer is a sacrifice acceptable to God through him that offered himself as a sacrifice of sweet smelling savour, from which God smels a favour of rest. God accepts of Christ first, and then of us, and what comes from us in him. We may boldly pray, as *Ps. 20.3.* *Lord remember all our offerings, and accept all our sacrifices.* The blessed Apostle Saint Paul doth will us, to offer up our selves a holy and acceptable Sacrifice to God, when we are once in Christ. In the Old Testament we have divers manifestations of this acceptance. He accepted the Sacrifice of *Abel* (as it is thought) by fire from Heaven; and so *Eliahs* sacrifice, and *Solomons* by fire. So in the New Testament, he shewed his acceptance of the *Disciples* meeting together, by a mighty wind and then filling them with the Holy Ghost. But now the declaration of the acceptance of our Persons, Graces, & Sacrifices, that we offer to him, is most in peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost, and from a holy fire of love kindled by the Spirit whereby our sacrifices are burned. In the incense of prayer how many sweet spices are burned together by this fire of faith working by love, as humility, and patience in submitting to Gods will, hope of a gracious answer, holiness, love to others, &c.

SERM. II.

Use 1.

If so be, that God accepts the performances and Graces (especially the prayers of his children) *Let it be an Argument to encourage us, to be much in all holy duties.* It would dead the heart of any man, to performe service, where it should not be accepted, and the eye turned aside, not vouchsafing a gracious looke upon it; this would be a killing of all comfortable endeavours. But when all that is good is accepted, and what is amisse is pardoned, when a broken desire, a cup of cold water shall not go unrespected, nay unrewarded, what can we desire more? It is infidelity which is dishonourable to God, and uncomfortable to our selves, that makes us so barren and cold in duties.

Use 2.

Onely let our care be to approve our hearts unto Christ. When our hearts are right, we cannot but think comfortably of Christ. Those that have offended some great persons, are afraid when they heare from them, because they thinke they are in a state displeasing to them: So a soule that is under the guilt of any sin, is so farre from thinking that God accepts of it, that it lookes to heare nothing from him but some message of anger and displeasure. But one that preserves acquaintance, due distance, and respect to a great person, heares from him with comfort, before he breaks open a letter, or sees any thing, he supposes it comes from a friend, one that loves him. So as we would desire to heare nothing but good newes from heaven, and acceptation of all that we doe, let us be carefull to preserve our selves in

in a good estate, or else our soules will tremble upon any discovery of Gods wrath. The guilty conscience argues, what can God shew to me, being such a wretch. The heart of such an one cannot but misgive; as where peace is made it will speake comfort. It is said of *Daniel*, that he was a man of Gods desires; and of *Saint John*, that Christ so loved him, that he leaned on his brest. Every one cannot be a *Daniel*, nor one that leans on Christ's bosome. There are degrees of favour and love; but there is no childe of God, but he is beloved & accepted of him in some degree; but something of this before in the former chapter.

I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice; I have eaten my honey-combe with my honey, &c.

That is, I have taken Contentment in thy Graces, together with acceptance, there is a delight, and God not only accepts, but he delights in the graces of his children. All my delight (saith *David*) is in those that are excellent; but this is not all, Christ comes with an enlargement of what he finds.

Christ comes, and comes not empty, whosoever he comes, but with abundance of Grace. If *Saint Paul* (who was but Christ's instrument) could tell the *Romanes*, *I hope to come to you in abundance of Grace and comfort*, because he was a blessed instrument to convey good from Christ to the people of God, as a Conduit-pipe? How much more shall Christ himselfe, where he is present, come with Graces and comfort? Those that have communion with Christ therefore, have

S A R M . II.
*The discourse
of a guilty con-
science.*

Rom. 15. 29.

SERM. II.
Mat 25.23.

Rev. 22.11.

*Exhortation to
have Commu-
nion with
Christ.*

Rev. 2.17.

have a comfortable communion, being sure to have it enlarged; for *To him that bath shall be given*. It is not onely true of his last comming, (when he shall come to judge the quick and the dead) *I come, and my reward is with me*; but also of all his intermediate comnings that are between: when he comes to the soule, he comes not onely to accept what is there, but still with his reward with him, the increase of Grace, to recompence all that is good with the increase thereof. This made his presence so desired in the Gospell with those that had gracious hearts; They knew all was the better for Christ, the company the better, for he never left any house, or table where he was, but there was an increase of comfort, and of Grace. And as it was in his Personall, so it is in his Spirituall presence, he never comes, but he increaseth Grace and Comfort.

Therefore, let us be stirred up to have communion with Christ (by this motive) that thus we may have an increase of a further measure of grace. Let us labour to be such as Christ may delight in, for our Graces are Honey and Spices to him; and where he tastes sweetnesse, he will bring more with him. To him that overcommeth, he promiseth the *hidden Mannah*; they had *Mannah* before, but he meanes they shall have more abundant communion with me, who am the *hidden Mannah*. There is abundance in him to be had, as the soule is capable of abundance. Therefore we may most fruitfully and comfortably be conversant in holy exercises, and communion with

with Christ, because our soules are fit to be enlarged more and more, till they have their fulnesse in heaven, and still there is more Grace and Comfort to be had in Christ, the more we have to deale with him.

But to come to shew what is meant by *Honey* and *Wine*, &c. not to take uncertain grounds from these words, but that which may be a foundation for us to build comfort and instruction on ; we will not shew in particular what is meant by *wine* and *Honey*, for that is not intended by the Holy Ghost ; but shew in general, how acceptable the Graces of the Spirit of Christ are to him, that they feed him, and delight him, as *hony* and *wine* do us, because in the covenant of grace he filleth us by his Spirit of Grace, to have comfort in us as we have in him : For, except there be a mutuall joy in one another, there is not communion. Therfore Christ furnisheth his Church with so much Grace, as is necessary for a state of absence here, that may fit her for communion with him for ever in heaven. As *Isaac* sent *Rebeckah* before the marriage, jewels, and ornaments to weare, that she might be more lovely when they met : So our blessed Saviour he sends to his Spouse from heaven, jewels, and ornaments ; that is, Graces wherewith adorned, he may delight in her more and more till the marriage be fulfilled. Therfore in this booke the Church is brought in delighting in Christ, and he in the Church. *Thy love* (saith the Church to him) is sweeter then *wine*. Christ saith to the Church againe, *Thy love*

SERM. II.

W^b by Grace is set forth by Honey & Wine.

Gen. 24. 22.

Cant. 1. 2.

SER. II.

is sweeter then wine. Whatsoever Christ saith to the Church, the Church saith backe againe to Christ, and he backe againe to the Church ; so there is a mutuall contentment and joy one in another.

Eat O friends, drinke, &c.

*That all are
stirred up to
rejoyce in the
Graces of the
church.*

Obseru.

1 Cor. 2. 12.

Here is an Invitation, when he comes stored with more Grace and comfort, he stirs them up; both the Church, others, and all that beare good will to his people, that they would delight in the Graces and comforts of his Church. Whence observe, That,

We ought to rejoyce in the Comforts and Graces of others, and of our selves.

He stirreth up the Church here as well as others, for he speakes to all, both to the Church, and the friends of it, he had need to stir her up to enjoy the comfort of her owne Grace ; for *they are two distinct benefits, to have Grace, and to know that we have it, though one Spirit worke both.* The Spirit works Grace, and shews us the things that God hath given us; yet sometimes it doth the one and not the other. *In the time of desertion and of Temptation we have Grace, but we know it not, right to comfort, but we feele it not.* There is no comfort of a scret unknown treasure ; but so it is with the Church, she doth not alwaye take notice of her owne Graces, and the right she hath to comfort.

We have need to have Christ's Spirit to help us to know what good is in us. And indeed a Christian should not onely examine his heart for the evill that is in him, to he humbled, but what good there

there is, that he may joy and be thankfull. And since Christ accepts the very first fruits, the earnest, and delights in them, we should know what he delights in, that we may goe boldly to him, considering, that it is not of our selves, but of Christ, whatsoever is graciously good. Therfore we ought to know our owne Graces, for Christ, when he will have us comfortable indeed, will discover to us what cause we have to rejoice, and shew us what is the worke of his own Spirit, and our right to all comfort.

And so, for others, we should not onely joy in our selves, and in our owne Condition, and Lot, but also in the happy condition of every good Christian. There is joy in heaven at the conversion of one sinner. God the Father joyes to have a new Son. God the Son to see the fruit of his owne Redemption, that one is pulled out of the state of damnation. And God the Holy-Ghost, that he hath a new Temple to dwell in. The Angels that they have a new charge to look to, that they had not before, to joyn with them to praise God: so there is joy in heaven, the Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost, with the Angels joy at it: And all true hearted Christians joy in the graces one of another.

For 1. God, Christ, and the Holy-Ghost have glory by it. 2. The Church hath comfort by the increase of a Saint. 3. The prayer of a Christian adds new strength to the Church. What a happy condition is it, when Gods glory, the Churches comfort and strength, and our owne joy meet together: So that we should all take notice of the Grace of God in others.

We

*That we ought
to rejoice in the
graces of others*

Luk. 15. 10.

Reas. I.

2.

3.

SERM. II.

Gal. I. 24.

Act. 11. 18.

We ought to take notice of the works of God in creation and providence ; when we see plants, starres, and such like, or else we dishonour God. What then should we doe for his gifts and Graces in his children, that are above these in dignity, should we not take notice of what is graciously good, and praise God for it ? Thus they did for *Pauis* conversion, they glorified God ; for when they saw, that *Pau* of a Woolfe, was become not only a sheep, but a shepheard and leader of Gods flocke, they glorified God.

So the beleeving Iewes, when the Gentiles were converted, they glorified God, that he had taken the Gentiles to be his garden and people. When Paul and others had planted the Gospele, and God gave the increase, the godly Iewes rejoiced at that good : So we that are Gentiles should rejoice to heare of the conversion of the Iewes, and pray for it, for then there will be a generall joy when that is. Want of joy shewes want of grace. There is not a surer Charakter of a Satanicall and Cainish disposition, then to looke on the Graces of Gods children with a malignant eye : as *Cain* who hated his brother, because his workes were better then his. Those that deprave the graces of God in others, and cloud them with disgraces, that they may not shine, and will not have the sweet oyntment of their good names to spread, but cast dead flies into it, shew that they are of his disposition that is the accuser of the Brethren. It is a signe of the childe of the Devill ; all that have grace in them, are of Christ and of the Angels

Angels disposition; They joy at the conversion and growth of any Christians. Here such as they are stiled friends and Beloved; and indeed none but friends and beloved can love as Christ loves, and delight as Christ delights.



The third Sermon.

CANT. V. 1, 2.

I am come into my Garden, my Sister, my Spouse: I have gathered my Myrrh with my Spice: I have eaten my honey-combe with my hony: I have drunk my wine with my milke: Eat O friends, drink, yea, drinke abundantly, O Beloved!

I sleep, but my heart waketh, &c.

Thath been shewed how Christ and the Church were feasting together. She intreated his company to come into his Garden, and eat his pleasant fruits: He according to her desire, was come, and not only feasted on the Churches provision, but also brought more with him. Christ taking walks in his Garden (that is, his Church, and every particular soul, which is as a sweet paradise for him to delight in) is much refreshed; and in witness of acceptance brings increase. What greater

SER. III.

Iam. 1.17.

Mat. 15.28.

Luk. 21.3.

Levit. 5.7.

Exod 35.6.

ter encouragement can we wish, then that we being by nature as the *Earth*, since the fall *accursed*, should be the *foile* of Christ's delight, planted and watered by him, and that what we yeeld, should be so well taken of him. We are under so gracious a covenant, that all our services are accepted, not only our *honey*, but *honey-combe*; not only our *wine*, but our *milke*, our weake services as well as our strong, because the spirit which we have from him sweetneth all. As in nature there is one common influence from heaven; but yet variety of flowers, Violets, Roses, Gilly-flowers, Spices, all sweet in their severall kind with a different kind of sweetnesse: so all graces have their beginning from the common influence of Christ's Spirit, though they differ one from another, and are all accepted of the *Father of Lights*, from whence they come. Christ wonders at his owne grace, *O woman great is thy faith*, and Cant. 3.6. *Who is this that commeth out of the wildernes like pillars of smoake, perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the Merchant?*

Let not the weakest of all others be discouraged; Christ looks not to what he brings so much as out of what store; that which is least in quantity, may be most in proportion; as the *Widowes mite* was more in acceptance then richer offerings. A *paire of turtle doves* was accepted in the Law, and those that brought but *goats haire* to the building of the Tabernacle.

The particulars here specisied that Christ tooke delight in, and inviteth others to a further degree of delight in, are,

Myrrh

Myrrh and Spice, honey and honey-combe, milke :

1. The sweetnesse of grace and
Which shew, 2. The variety Spirituall
3. The use Comfort.

Myrrhe and Spices. 1. refresh the spirits, and
2. preserve from putrefaction, which are therefore
used in embalming. If the soule be not embalmed
with grace, it is a noisome carrion soule,
and as it is in it selfe, so whatsoever commeth
from it is abominable.

Milke and Honey nourish and strengthen, and
Wine increaseth spirits, and thereupon encourageth,
and allayeth sorrow and cares. *Give Wine to
him that is ready to dye.* The fence of the love of
Christ is sweeter then wine, it banisheth feares,
and sorrow and care.

Prov. 31.6.

From this mutuall delight between Christ
and his Spouse, we observe next, that,

*There is a mutuall feasting betwixt Christ and his
Church.* The Church bringeth what she hath of
his Spirit, and Christ comes with more plenty.

For there being so near a covenant between
him and us, we are by his grace to performe all
offices on our part, we invite him, and he inviteth
us. There is not the meanest Christian in whom
there is not somewhat to welcome Christ with-
all; but Christ sends his provision before, and
comes (as we say) to his owne cost; he sends a
spirit of faith, a spirit of love, a spirit of obedi-
ence. Some are content to invite others, but are
loth to goe to others, as if it were against state:
they would have wherewith to entertain Christ,

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but are unwilling to be beholding to Christ.
 2. Some are content to have benefit by Christ, as his righteousness to cover them, &c. but they desire not grace to entertaine Christ, but a heart truly gracious desireth both to delight in Christ, and that Christ may delight in it : It desireth grace together with mercy, holinesse with happiness. Christ could not delight in his love to us, if we by his grace had not a love planted in our hearts to him. But to come to speak of this Feast.

We see it pleaseth Christ to vaile heavenly matters with comparisons fetcht from earthly things, that so he may enter into our soules the better by our senses.

I.

Christ maketh us a feast, a marriage feast, a marriage feast with the Kings Sonne, of all feasts the most magnificent. A feast first in regard of the choise rarities we have in Christ. We have the best, and the best of the best. Fat things, and the marrow of fatnesse, wine, and wine on the lees, refined that preserveth the strength. The comforts we have from Christ, are the best comforts, the peace, the best peace, the priviledges, the highest priviledges. His flesh crucified for us, to satisfie divine justice, is meat indeed, his blood shed for us, is drinke indeed, that is the best, the onely meat and drinke to refresh our soules, because these feed our soules, and that to eternall life. The love of God the Father in giving Christ to death, and Christ's love in giving himself together with full contentment to divine justice : this gift it is that the soul especially feeds on. What could Christ give

II. 1. 25. 6.

III. 3. 5. 5.

give better then himselfe to feed on; he thought nothing else worthy for the soule to feed on; and this it daily feeds on, as daily guilt riseth from the breakings out of the remainder of corruption. Other dainties are from this, from hence we have the Spirit, and graces of the Spirit. If he giveth himself, will he not give all things with himself?

As Christ maketh a feast of choise things for his elect and choise Spouse; so there is variety as in a feast. *Christ is made to us of God, Wisdom, Righteousnesse, Sanctification, and Redemption,* that we should not be too much cast downe with thought of our owne folly, guilt, unholinesse, and misery. There is that in Christ which answereth to all our wants, and an all-sufficiency for all degrees of happiness. Therefore he hath termes from whatsoever is glorious, and comfortable in heaven and earth. Christ is *all marrow, all sweetenesse;* all the severall graces and comforts we have, and the severall promises wherby they are made over and conveyed unto us, are but Christ dished out in severall manner, as the need of every Christian shall require. Christ himselfe is the Ocean, issuing into severall stremes, to refresh the city of God. We can be in no condition, but we have a promise to feed on, and *all promises are Yea and Amen* madeto us in Christ, and performed to us for Christ.

Therefore as we have in Christ a feast for variety, so for sufficiency of all good. No man goeth hungry from a feast. It was never heard for any to famish at a feast. In Christ there is not on-

2.

1 Cor. 1.30.

2 Cor. 1.20.

3.

Sect. III.

Ioh. 10. 10.

Ioh. 7. 38.

Eph. 3. 20.

4.

5.

ly abundance, but redundancy, a diffusive and a spreading goodnesse. As in breasts to give milk, in clouds to drop downe showers, in the Sun to send forth beames: As Christ is full of grace and truth, so he fully dischargeth all his offices. There is an overflowing of all that is good for our good. He that could multiply bread for the body, he can multiply grace for our soule : If he giveth life, he giveth it in abundance : If he giveth water of life, he giveth rivers, not small stremes : If he giveth peace and joy, he giveth it in abundance; his scope is to fill up our joy to the full. As he is able, so is he willing to do for us far more abundantly then we are able to thinke or speake. Where Christ is present he bringeth plenty with him. If wine be wanting at the first, he will rather turne water into wine, then there should be a faile.

In a feast there is variety of friendly company: so here friends are stirred up to refresh themself's with us. We have the blessed Trinity, the Angels and all our fellow members in Christ to come with us.

There is no envy in spirituall things, wherein whatsoever the one hath, the other hath not the lesse.

In a feast because it is intended for rejoicing, there is musick, and what musick like to the sweet harmony between God reconciled in Christ and the soule, and between the soule and it selfe in inward peace and joy of the Holy-Ghost, shedding the love of Christ in the soule. We doe not onely joy, but glory under hope of glory,

glory, and in afflictions, and in God now as ours, in whom now by Christ we have an interest. When we come sorrowfull to this feast, we depart chearfull. This as Davids Harp stils all passions and distempers of spirit.

S E R . III.
Rom. 6. 5, 2, 3.
10.

The founder and master of the feast is Christ himselfe, and withall is both guest and banquet and all. All graces and comforts are the fruits of his Spirit, and he alone that infused the soule, can satisfie the soule; he that is above the conscience, can only quiet the conscience, he is that *wisedome* that *sends forth maid*s, his Ministers to invite to his feast. It is he that cheereth up his guests as here. Those that invited others, brought oyntment and powred it out upon them, to shew their welcome, and to cheare them up: as may appeare by our Saviours speech to the Pharisee that invited him. So we have from Christ both the oyle of grace, and oyle of gladnesse; he creates the fruits of the lips to be peace, speaking that peace and joy to the heart that others doe to the eare. *He raiseth Pastors according to his owne heart, to feed his sheep.*

Prov. 9 3.

Luk. 7. 44.

Isa. 57. 19.

Ier. 3. 15.

The vessels wherein Christ conveyeth his dainties, are, the ministry of the Word and Sacra- ments, by the Word and Sacra- ments we come to enjoy Christ, and his comforts and graces, and by this feast of grace we come at length to the feast of feasts, that feast of glory, when we shall be satisfied with the image of God, and enjoy fulnesse of pleasures for evermore ; and which addes to the fulnesse, we shall fully know that it shall be a never interrupted joy.

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Phil. 4.4.

Phil 4.4.

Ioh. 15.33.

We see then that we cannot please Christ better then in shewing our selves welcome by cheerfull taking part of his rich provision. It is an honour to his bounty to fall too, and it is the temper of spirit that a Christian aimes at, to *rejoyce alwayes in the Lord*, and that from enjoyning our priviledges in him. We are not bidden to mourne alwayes, but to *rejoyce alwayes*, and that upon good advisement, *rejoyce*, and *I say againe* (saith Saint Paul) *rejoyce*. Indeed we have causes of mourning, but it is that the seed of joy should be sowne in mourning, and we can never be in so forlorne a condition, wherein if we understand Christ and our selves, we have not cause of joy. In me (saith Christ) *ye shall have peace*. The world will feed us with *bread of affliction*. If the world can help it, we shall have sorrow enough, and Christ knowes that well enough, and stirs us up to a cheerfull feeding on that he hath procured for us. He hath both will and skill, and power, and authority to feed us to everlasting life; for the Father sent him forth, and sealed him to that purpose. All the springs of our joy are from him.

Our duty is to accept of Christs inviting of us; what will we do for him if we will not feast with him? we will not suffer with him, if we will not feast with him. Happy are they that come, though compelled by crosses and other sharp wayes. If we rudely and churlishly refuse his feast here, we are like never to tast of his feast hereafter. Nothing provokes so deeply as kindnesse despised. It was the cause of the Iewes re-
jection.

jection. How shall we escape, not if we persecute, but if we doe but neglect so great salvation.

S E R. III.
Heb. 2.3.

That which we should labour to bring with us, is a taste of these dainties, and an appetite to them. The soule hath a tast of its owne, and as all creatures that have life, have a tast to relish and distinguish of that which is good for them from that which is offensive: so wheresoever spirituall life is, there is likewise a tast suitable to the sweet relish that is in spirituall things. God should lose the glory of many excellent creatures, if there were not severall senses to discerne of severall goodnesses in them: so if there were not a tast in the soule, we could never delight in God, and his rich goodnesse in Christ.

Tast is the most necessary fence for the preservation of the creature, because there is nearest application in tast, and that we should not be deceived in tast, we heare, see, and smell before, and if these senses give a good report of the object, then we taste of it, and digest it, and turne it into fit nourishment: so the spirit of man after judgement of the fitnessse of what is presented, tasteth of it, delights in it, and is nourished by it. There is an attractive drawing power in the soule, whereby every member sucks that out of the food that is convenient for it: so the soule drawes out what is well digested by judgement, and makes it its owne for severall uses.

*Omnis vita gu-
stus ducitur.*

The chiefe thing that Christ requireth, is a good stomacke to these dainties.

The meanes to procure an appetite. We are

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first to be sensible of spirituall wants and misery. The Passeover lamb was eaten with sowre herbs; so Christ crucified, relisheth best to a soule affected with bitternessse of sin. Whilst men are rich in their owne conceit, they goe empty away; the duties and performances they trust too, are but husks, windy empty chaffe; swelling is not kinde nourishment.

2.

That which hinders the sharpnesse of the stomacke, are cold distluxions, that dull and flat the edge of it: So upon plodding upon the world, cold distillations drop upon the soule, and take away the favour and desire of heavenly things. These things fill not. There is both a vanity of emptinesse, and a vanity of short continuance in them. *Why should we lay out our money, spend our time, our wits, our endeavour so much about them; this makes so many starvelings in religion.*

Isa, 55.

Besides, there be other noysome affections to be purged, as 1 Pet. 2. 1. which breed a distast and disaffection to spirituall things; as malice and guile, &c. How can Christ be sweet to that soule unto which revenge is sweet.

3.

Exercise quickens appetite. Those that exercise themselves unto godlinesse, see a need of spirituall strength to maintaine duty. A dull formalist keeps his round, and is many yeares after where he was before; sees no need of further growth or strength. A Christian life managed as it should be indeed, as it hath much going out, so it must have much comming in, it will not els be kept up. Those that have a journey to goe, will

re

refresh themselves for afterward, lest they faint by the way.

Company likewise of such as labour for that blessed food that endureth to life eternall, provoketh to fall too as the rest doe, especially if they be equall or go beyond us in parts ; for we will reason with our selves, have not I as much need as they, if these things be good for them, then they are good for me ?

Thus Saint Paul foretelleth, that the example of the Gentiles should provoke the Iewes to come in, and taste of the Banquet Christ hath provided for both. Especially this should stir us up earnestly to take our part in that Christ hath provided ; because we know not how soone the table may be taken away : when men see the dishes in removing, though before they have discoursed away much time of their supper, yet then they will fall fresh to it. We know not how long wisedome will be inviting of us, it will be our wisedome to take our time, least we put off so long, as wisedome her selfe laughs at our destruction, and a famine be sent, of all famines the most miserable , a famine of the Word, and then we may pine away eternally without comfort. Christ will not alwaies stand inviting of us, if we will none of his cheare, others will, and shall, when we shall starve.

Let this draw us on, that we see here Christ's hearty and free welcome, the gracious look that we are like to have from him. He counts it an honour, since he hath made such rich provision, for us

SAR. III.

3 Kin. 4.6.

Phil. 4.7.

us to take part, and for our part shew our unwillingnesse, that such free kindnesse should be refused. We cannot honour his bounty more then to feed liberally of that he liberally sets before us. We are glad to perceive our friends upon invitation to thinke themselves welcome. Let us open our mouth wide, since Christ is soready to fill it, we are not streightned in his love, but in our own hearts. *The widdowes oyle failed not till her vessels failed.* We are bidden to delight in the Lord, and in whom should we delight, but where all fulnesse is to be had to delight in? Our spirits are not so large as those blessed comforts are, which we are called to the enjoyment of. If the capacity of our soules were a thousand times larger, yet there is so large a sea of comfort in Christ, as they are not able to comprehend it : A taste of these good things breed joy unspeakable, and peace that passeth understanding, what will the fulnesse doe? This taste we feele in the ordinances will bring us to that fulnesse hereafter. O let us keep our appetite for these things which are so delightfull, so suitable to the soule. How great is that goodnes which he both layes up for hereafter, and layes out for his, even here in this life.

In some ages of the Church, the feasts that Christ hath made have been more solemne and sumptuous then in other, thereafter as Christ hath been more or lesse clearly and generally manifested. At Christs first comming there was a greater feast then before ; because the riches of Gods love in Christ were then laid open, and the pale

pale of the Church was enlarged by the coming in of the Gentiles: so will there be a royall feast when the Iewes shall be converted. *Blessed then shall those be that shall be called to the Supper of the Lamb.* Suppers are in the end of the day, and this Supper shall be furnisht towards the end of the world.

But then will be the true magnificent supper, when all that belong to Gods election shall meet together, and feed upon that heavenly Manna for ever; then there will be nothing but marrow it selfe, and wine without all dregs; in all our contentments here, there is some mixture of the contrary; then nothing but pure quintessence. In the meane time he lets fall some Manna in this our wildernes, he lets us relish that now; it will not putrifie as the other Manna did, but endure, and make us endure for ever. *Its the true bread of life.*

Marke how Christ drawes his Spouse on to drinke, and drinke abundantly; there is no danger of taking too much: where the spring is infinite, we can never draw these wels dry, never sucke these breasts of consolation too much, and the more strong and chearfull we are, the better service we shall performe, and the more accepted: delight is as sugar, sweet in it self, and it sweetens all things els. The joy of the Lord is our strength. Duties come off more gracefully, and Religion is made more lovely in the eyes of all, when it comes forth in strength and cheerfulness, Christs house-keeping is credited hereby. *In our Fathers house is plenty enough.* When the Martyrs had drunk

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drunke largely of this wine, it made them forget friends, riches, honours, life it selfe : the joy stirred up by it, carried them through all torments.

If any be hindred by conceit of unworthines, if affected deeply with it, let them consider what kind of men were compelled to the banquet, the blind, the lame. See a lively picture of Gods mercy in the example of the *Prodigall*, he feares sharp chiding, and the *Father provides a rich banquet*; he goeth to his Father, but the *Father runs to meet him*. Did Christ ever turne backe any that came unto him, if they came out of a true sense of their wants?

Luk. 15.

Eat O friends.

1 Cor. 3.9.

Psal. 75.8.

Christ out of the largenesse of his affections multiplyeth new titles and compellatioas [Beloved and friends] Christ provides a banquet, and invites his friends not his enemies. *Those good things that neither eye hath seen, nor earc hath heard, that are above our conceit to apprehend*, these are provided for those that love him, not that hate him : he mingles another cup for them, a cup of wrath, and they are to drinke up the very dregs of it. Friendship is the sweetnesse, intimatione and strength of love. In our friends our love dwells, and rests it self. Conjugall friendship is the sweetest friendship. All the kinds and degrees of friendship meet in Christ towards his Spouse ; it is the friendship of a husband, of a brother, and if there be any relation in the world wherein friendship is, all is too little to expresse the love of Christ.

In friendship there is mutuall consent, an union
of

of judgement and affections, there is a mutuall sympathy in the good and ill one of another, as it there were one soule in two bodies : there be mutual friends and mutuall enemies. *Do I not hate them* (saith David) *that hate thee.* There is mutuall love of one another for their owne sakes ; in flattery men love themselves most ; in semblance love others, but all is in refle&tion to themselves.

There is liberty which is the life of friendship, there is a free intercourse between friends, a free opening of secrets : so here Christ openeth his secrets to us, and we to him, we acquaint him with the most hidden thoughts of our hearts, and we lay open all our cares and desires before him: thus *Abraham* was called Gods friend, and the Disciples Christs friends. It is the office of the Spirit to reveale the secrets of Christ heart to us concerning our owne salvation ; he doth not reveale himselfe to the world.

In friendship there is mutuall solace and comfort one in another. Christ delighteth himselfe in his love to his Church, and his Church delighteth her selfe in her love to Christ. Christs delight was to be with the sons of men, and ours is to be with him.

In friendship there is a mutuall honour and respect one of another ; but here is some difference in this friendship ; for though Christ calls us friends, and therein in some sort brings himselfe down to us, yet we must remember that this is a friendship of unequals: Christs honouring of us is his putting honour upon us; our honoring of him

is

is the giving him the honour due to his name. This friendship must be maintained by due respect on our parts. As he is our friend, so he is our King, and knows how to correct us if we forget our distance. If he here seeme to use us hardly, it is that he may use us the more kindly after : he suffers much for us, therefore we may well allow him the liberty of seasonable correcting of us.

He that inspireth friendship into others, will undoubtedly keep the lawes of friendship himselfe, will count our enemies his enemies. The enemies of the Church shill one day know that the Church is not friendlesse.

And as his friendship is sweet, so constant in all conditions ; he useth not his friends as we doe flowers, regard them onely whenthey are fresh ; but he breeds that in us, that may make us such as he may still delight in us : if other friends faile (as friends may faile) yet this friend will never faile us : If we be not ashamed of him, he will never be ashamed of us. How comfortable would our life be, if we could draw out the comfort that this title of friend affoordeth : It is a comfortable, a fruitfull, an eternall friendship.

I sleep, but my heart waketh.

Here the Church expresteth a changeable passage of her spirituall condition, after she had recovered her selfe out of a former desertion, expressed in the beginning of the third Chapter, and enjoyed a comfortable intercourse with Christ, now she falleth into a deeper desertion and temptation, from the remainder of corruption

tion getting strength. The Church now falleth asleep, then was awake in the night, and sought her beloved; here is no present awaking, no seeking; there no misusage by the watchmen as here; there she findeth him more speedily, here she falleth sick with love before Christ discovereth himselfe.

Before we come to the words, obserue in generall,

That the state of the Church and every Christian is subject to spirituall alterations. The Church is alwaies beloved, a spouse, a friend; but in this one state there falleth out variety of changes. No creature subject to so many changes as man; from a state of innocency he fell into a state of corruption; from that he by grace is restored to a state of grace, and from grace to glory, where his condition shall be as Christ's now is, and as the heaven the place is, altogether unchangeable. And in that state of grace, how many intercourses be there, the foundation of Gods love to us, and grace in us alwaies remaining the same, once beloved, for ever beloved.

We see here after a feast the Church falleth asleep: See it in *Abraham*, sometimes strong in faith, sometimes fearfull. *David* sometimes standing, sometimes falling, sometimes recovering himself, & standing faster, sometimes triumphing, *the Lord is the light of my countenance, whom shall I feare*; sometimes againe, *I shall one day fall by the hands of Saul*. In the very same Psalme he begins with, *Rebuke me not in thy wrath, and ends with, Away*

SER. III.

1.

2.

3.

Observe. I.

Psal. 27. 1.

¹ Sam. 27. 1.
Psal. 6.

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Ser. III.

The Reason.

ye wicked. Elias, though zealous, yet after flies for his life. So Job, Peter, sometimes resolute and valiant, otherwhile sinks for feare.

The ground is by reason of variety of outward occurrences working upon the diversity of principles in us, nature and grace, both nature and grace are alwaies active in us in some degree, when corruption gets strength, then we finde a sicke state creeping upon us, and lose our former frame. It's with the soule as with the body, in a certaine period of time it gathereth ill humours which breake out into aguish distempers at length: so thereliques of a spirituall disease not carried away, will ripen and gather to a head. This should teach us when we are well to study to keep an even course, and to watch over the first stirrings; and likewise if we see some unvennesse in our wayes, not to censure our selves or others over-harsly. Exact evennesse is to be striven after here, but to be enjoyed in another world.

Obseru. 2.

2. Wee see by comparing the state of the Church here with the state of it in the third Chapter, that where corruption is not throughly purged, and a carefull watch kept over the soule, there after a recovery will follow a more dangerous distemper, corruption will not onely strive for life, but for rule. If there had been a through reformation in the Church after her former trouble, and a through closing with Christ, she would not thus have fallen into a more dangerous condition. We see David in his latter times fal to

numbring of the people; and Sampson after he had done great services for the Church, at length shamefully betrayes his strength; and he that had ruled others, submits to be ruled by a base strumpet. *Iona* for not through repenting for his running from his calling, falleth after to quarrell with God himselfe. It is the best therefore to deale throughly with our hearts, else flesh unsubdued will owe us a greater shame, & we shall dishonor our owne beginnings. Yet this is the comfort, that this will occasion deeper humility and hatred of sinne in those that are Gods, and a faster cleaving to God than ever before, as we see in the Church here: afterwards grace will have the better at last.

3. We may observe the ingenuity of the Church in laying open her owne state. It is the disposition of Gods people to be ingenuous in opening their state to God, as in *David, Nehemiah, Ezra, &c.*

The reason is thus:

1. By a free and full confession we give God the honour of his wisedome in knowing of our own condition secret and open, we give him the honour of mercy that will not take advantage against us, the honour of power and authority over us, if he should shew his strength against us. We yeeld unto him the glory of all his chiefe prerogatives: whereupon *Ioshuah* moveth *Achan* to a free confession, *My son, give glory to God.*

2. We shame Satan, who first takes away shame of sinning, and then takes away shame for

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sin, he tempts us not to be ashamed to do that we are ashamed to confess : so we by silence keep Satans counsell against our owne soules. If we accuse our selves, we put him out of office, who is *the accuser of the brethren.*

3. We prevent likewise malicious imputations from the world. *Austin* answered roundly and well when he was upbraided with the sinnes of his former age : what, thou (saith he) findest fault with, I have condemned in my selfe before.

4. This ingenuous dealing easeth the soule, giving vent to the griefe of it:whiles the arrowes head sticks in the wound it will not heale : Sinne unconfessed is like a broken peece of rusty yron in the body, it must be gotten out, else it will by ranckling and festring cause more danger. It is like poison in the stomacke, if it be not presently cast up it will infect the whole body. Is it not better to take shame to our selves now, than to be ashamed hereafter before Angels, Devils and Men? How carefull is God of us, by this private way to prevent future shame?

5. This faithfull dealing with our selves is oft a meanes of present delivery out of any trouble. *David* in the 32. *Psalme* 4. was in a great distemper both of body and spirit ; his moisture was turned into the drought of Summer. It is thought he made this Psalme between the time of his sin and his pardon. What course taketh he? *I said*(saith he)*that is,I resolved to confess my sin, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.* Upon a free and full, a faithfull, and ingenuous confessi-

*Qua ture
bendi, ego
dannavi.*

*Ferrum in vu-
nere.*

on,

on, without *all guile of spirit*, he found ease presently both in soul and body. The cause of Gods severe dealing with us, is, that we should deale severely with our selves. The best tryall of Religion in us, is by those actions whereby we reflect on our selves, by judging and condemning of our selves; for this argueth a spirit without guile. Sin and shifting came into the world together. The subtily of proud nature, especially in eminity is such, that sinnes may passe for vertues; because sinne and Satan are alike in this, they cannot endure to appeare in their owne colour and habit; and so those that oppose it shall be accounted opposers of good. This *guile of Spirit* hath no blessednesse belonging to it, take heed of it.

4. Marke further one signe of a gracious soule, to be abased for lesser defects, sleepinesse and indisposition to good. One would thinke drowsinesse were no such great matter; O but the church had such sweet acquaintance with Christ, that every little indisposition that hindered any degree of communion was grievous to her. You shall have a *Iudas*, a *Saul*, an enormous offender confesse great fals that gripe his conscience; all shall be cast up, that the conscience being disburdened may feele a little ease: But how few have you humbled for dulnesse of spirit, want of love, of zeale, and cheerfulness in duty: This accompanied with strife against it, argues a good spirit indeed.

A carnall man is not more humbled for grosse sins, than a gracious Christian for wants in good

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actions, when it is not with him as it hath been, and as he would. The reason is, where there is a cleare and heavenly light, there lesser motes are discernable : and spirituall life is sensible of any obstruction and hinderance. This goeth in the world for unnecessary nicety : the world strai-neth not at these gnats : But those upon whose hearts the Sun of Righteousnesse hath shined, have both a cleare sight and a tender heart.

To come to the words [*I sleep*] The Church fetcheth a comparison from the body - to ex-presse the state of the soule. It is one use of our body to help us in spirituall expressions. Whilst the soule dwelleth in the body, it dependeth much in the conceiving of things upon the phan-tasie, and the phantasie upon the senses. Wee come to conceive of spirituall sleep by sleep of the body, which we are well enough acquainted with.

The Church, as she consists of a double princi-ple, flesh and spirit mingled together in all parts, as darknesse and light in the twilight and daw-ning of the day: so here she expresseth her condi-tion in regard of either part, so far as she was car-nall, she slept, so far as she was spirituall, she was awake.

In this mixt condition, the flesh for the present prevailed, yet so as the Spirit had its working, *she slept, but her heart waked.*

The words containe a confession, *I sleep*, and a correction, *but my heart waketh*. She hath a dou-ble aspect; one to the ill, *her sleeping*; the other to her

her good, her heart in some degree awaked. The Spirit of God is a discerning Spirit, it discovreth what is flesh and what is Spirit.

So that we must not conceive this sleep to be that dead sleep all men are in by nature, nor to be that judiciall sleep, that spirit of slumber which is a further degree of that naturall sleep, to which God giveth up some as a seale of their desperate condition; but here is meant that sleep that ariseth out of the remainder of corruption unsubdued, and now is here in the Church prevailing over the better part. Flesh and Spirit have both their intercourse in us as, *Moses* and *Amalek* had: unlesse we stand upon our guard, the flesh will get the upper ground, as we see here. The best are no further safe than they are watchfull.

For the cleare understanding of this, observe some correspondency in the resemblance, wherin too much curiosity is lothsome and postill-like, and calleth the mind too much from the kernell to the shell.

Bodily and spirituall sleep resemble each the other in the causes, in the effects, and in the dangerous issue.

The sleep of the body commeth from the obstruction and binding up of the senses by vapours which arise out of the stomacke: so there be spirituall fumes of worldly cares and desires that obstruct the senses of the soule; therefore our blessed Saviour counts it a spirituall surfetting, when the soule is oppressed with care about the world; lusts bring the soule a bed: Prosperity is a

The resem-
blance between
bodily and spi-
rituall sleep.

I.

Luk. 21.34.

SAR. III.

2.

Strong vapour, if it overcome not the braine, yet it weakeneth it as strong waters doe. See it in Solomon himselfe. The Disciples fell asleep in the garden when they were oppressed with heaviness and sorrow, which passions will have the like effect upon the soule.

3.

Sleep ariseth oft from wearinesse, and want of spirits : so there is a spirituall wearinesse arising from discouragements, and too much expence of the strenght of the soule upon other matters, upon impertinencies that concerne not the best state of the soule.

4.

Some are brought asleep by musick: so many by flattering enticements and insinuations of others joyning with their owne flattering deceitfull heart, are cast into a spirituall sleep.

5.

Sleep ariseth from want of exercise, when there is a cessation from spirituall exercise about the proper object of it, there followeth a spirituall sleep. Exercise keeps waking.

6.

Sleep ariseth oft from cold diseases, as Lethargies, from cold grosse humors ; cold, earthly, grosse affections about the things here below, benumme the soule, and bring it into a heavy, drowsie, sleepy temper.

7.

Sometimes sleep is caused by some kind of poyson, especially the poyson of Aspes which kills in sleeping : and doe not sinfull delights doe the like to the soule: insensible evils are the most dangerous evils.

8.

Otherwhile slothfull yawning company disposeth to sleep, there is no more ordinary cause of spirituall

spirituall sleep, than conversing with spirituall sluggards, that count it a high point of wisedome not to be forward in Religion. These formall proud persons, as they are cold themselves, so they labour to cast water upon the heat of others. Nay those that are other wise good, if declining in their first love, will encline others to a fellowship in the same secure temper, lest they should be upbraided by the vigilancy of others.

1.

They are alike in the effects. Men disposed to be asleep desire to be alone. Those likewise that are disposed to take a spirituall nap, will avoid company, especially of such as would awake them. They will hardly endure rowzing meanes.

2.

Men will draw the curtains and shut out light, when they mean to compose themselves to rest. So when men favour themselves in some wayes not allowable, they are afraid to be disquieted by the light ; light both discovereth, awaketh, and stirs up to working : And men when they are loth to doe what they know, are loth to know what they should doe. *They that sleep, sleep in the night.* As, otherwise a good King, shut up the Prophet in prison for doing his duty : Much of the anger that men beare against the word layd open to them, is because it will not suffer them to sleep quietly in their sinnes. Such as will suffer them to live quietly in their sinnes, they are the quiet and honest men. There cannot be a worse signe than when men will not endure wholsome words, it is a signe they are in an ill league with

1 Thes. 5.7.

SER. III.

3.

Isa. 29.8.

that they should above all wage warre against

In sleep phantasie ruleth, and dreames in phantasie; men in sleep dreame of false good, and forget true danger.

Many cherish golden dreames, dreame of meat, and when they awake, their soule is empty. Vaine hopes are the dreames of waking men, as vaine dreames are of sleeping and carnall men, whose life is but a dreame.

In sleep there is no exercise of senses or motion: asthen men are not sensible of good or ill, they move neither to good or ill: Motion followeth sensiblenesse: what good we are not sensible of, we move not unto. Hence sleep is of kin to death, for the time depriving us of the use of all senses; and a secure professor in appearance differs little from a dead professour; both of them are unactive in good; and what they doe, they do it without delight, in an uncomely and unacceptable manner, unbeseeming the state of a Christian. It is all one to have no senses, and not to use them; we may say of men in this sleepy temper, as the Scripture speaks of Idols, *they have eyes and see not, eares and heare not, &c.*

Psal. 115.5.

So likewise they are alike in danger: In sleep the pretiousest thing men carry about them, is taken away without resistance; and they are ready to let loose what they held fast before, were it never so rich a jewell. And it is so in spirituall sleepinesse; men suffer the profession of the truth to be wrung from them without much withstanding; and with letting fall their watch, let

fall

fall likewise, if not their grace, yet the exercise of their graces, and are in danger to be robbed of all.

There is no danger but a man in sleep is faire for, and exposed unto: *Sisera was slaine asleep, and Ishbosheth at noone day:* and there is no temptation, no sinne, no judgement, but a secure drowsie Christian is open for; which is the ground of so oft inforsing watchfulness by the Spirit of God in the Scriptures. As spirituall deadnes of spirit isa cause of other sins, so likewise it is a punishment of them; God powreth a Spirit of *dead sleep upon men, and closeth up their eyes,* till some heavy judgement falleth upon them; and how many carnall men never awake in this world, till they awake in hell? No wonder therefore that Satan labours to cast men into a dead sleep all that he can, and deludes them with dreames of a false good, that their estate is good, and like so to continue, that to morrow shall be as to day, that no danger is neare, though Gods wrath hangeth over their head, ready to be revealed from heaven.

Thus wee see how the resemblance holds. Some apply this to Constantines time about three hundred yeares after Christ, when the Church upon peace and plenty grew secure, and suffered Ecclesiastical abuses to creep in. Religion begat plenty, and the daughter devoured the mother. This made the Writers of the Ecclesiastical Stories to question, whether the Church hath more hurt by open persecution, or peace, when

2 Sam. 4.7.

Isa. 29. 10.

Theodor l.f.

one

Ser. III.

Aug ad Janu-
ar. Epist. 119.Tolerabilior
iudeorum con-
ditio quam
nostra.

*Si tuo tempore
bec dicebas (O
sapient Augu-
stine) quid no-
stra tempestate
dixisses? Geron-
son de vit. spi-
ritual.*

*Si tenerentur in
suo rigore, max-
ima pars Eccle-
sie damnaretur.*

one Christian undermineth and rageth against another. Humane inventions were so multiplied, that not long after in *Augustines* time, he complained that the condition of the Iewes was more tolerable then theirs; for though the Jewes were under burdens, yet they were such as were imposed by God himselfe, and not humane presumptions. But *Gerson* many hundred yeares after increaseth his complaint. If (O *Augustine*) thou saidst thus in thy time, what wouldest thou have said if thou hadst lived now? when men (as a toy taketh them in the head) will multiply burdens. And he was not afraid to say, that the number of humane constitutions was such, that if they were observed in rigour, the greatest part of the Church would be damned. Thus whilst the husbandman slept, the envious man Satan slept not, but few'd his teares. Thus Popery grew up by degrees, till it overspread the Church; whilst the watchmen that should have kept others awake, fell asleep themselves. And thus we answer the Papists, when they quarrell with us about the beginning of their errors. They aske of us when such and such an heresie began : we answer, that those that should have observed them, were asleep. Popery is a mystery that crept into the Church by degrees under glorious pretences. Their errors had modest beginnings. Worshipping of Images arose from reserving the pictures of friends, and after that were brought into the Church. Invocation of Saints arose from some of the Fathers figurative turning of

of their speech to somethat were dead. Transubstantiation had rise from some transcendent unwary phrases of the Fathers. The Papacy it selfe from some titles of the Romish Church and Bishop. Nothing in Popery so grosse, but had some small beginnings, which being neglected by those that should have watched over the Church, grew at length unsufferable. No wonder if the Papists be cast into a dead sleep, they have drunke too deep of the whores cup. They that worship Images, are (as the Scripture saith) *like unto them, they have eyes and see not, &c.* They canoat discerne of their errours, though they be never so ridiculous and senslesse, as prayer in an unknowne tongue, and such like.

And upon this state of the Church, let us adde this caution.

If the best men be so prone to sleep, then we cannot safely at all times build upon their judgement. The Fathers of the Church were not alwayes awake. There be few of them, but in some things we may appeale from themselves sleeping, to themselves waking. The best having some darknesse left in their understandings, and some lusts unsubdued in their affections, may write and speak sometimes out of the worst part and principle that is in them, as well as out of the best, when they keep not close to the rule.

A Caution.

When our adversaries preffe us with the authority of Fathers, we appeale to them where they speake advisedly, and of purpose. When they were not awaked by heretickes, they speak some-

SER. III.

*Patres in maximis sunt nostri,
in multis varijs,
in minimis vestri. Wh.*

sometimes unworthily, and give advantages to hereticks that followed. It is the manner of our adversaries to make the unwarrantable practise of the ancienter time a rule of their practise, and the doubtfull opinions of the ancients their own grand tenets. Wherein in both they deale unsafe-
ly for themselves, and injuriously towards us, when we upon grounds in some things dissent, which liberty (oft when they should not) they will take to themselves.

But howsoever this sleepy condition agreeth to the former times of the Church, yet I wish there were not cause to apply it to our selves, in this latter age of the Church, wherein many of the ancient heresies are revived; and besides, the evils that accompany long peace, take hold of us, and will prevaile too far if we doe not rowze up our selves. The Church is in the Commonwealth, and usually they flourish and fall together. When there is a sleep of the Church, for the most part there is a sleep of the State. A civill sleep is, when in grounds of danger there is no apprehension of danger, and this sleep is a punishment of spirituall sleep, when with *Ephraim* a State hath gray haires, and knoweth it not, when judgements abroad will not awake men; when noise and pinching will not awake, the sleep must needs be deep. The whole world almost is in combustion round about us, and many countries thought themselves as safe a little before their troubles, as we now think our selves. If feare of outward dangers will not awake, then spi-

spiritual dangers will not, as being more secret & not obvious to sense. No wonder then if few will beleeve our report of the fearefull condition of wicked men in the world to come. A man may be startled and awaked with outward dangers that is spiritually sottish; but he that is carelesse of outward danger, will be regardlesse of what we say in spirituall dangers. The feare of danger may be the greater, when (as it was amongst the Iewes) those that should be watchfull themselves, and awake others, in stead of awaking, rocke the cradle, and cry, *peace, peace, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord*; yet we must never forget to be mindfull with thankfulness for peace, and the Gospell of peace, which yet by Gods blessing we enjoy, alwayes suspecting the readinesse of nature to grow secure under the abundance of favours, and so to blesse our selves in that condition.

1. Now we know that sleep is creeping upon us, by comparing our present condition with our former, when we are in a more wakefull frame, when the graces of Gods Spirit were in exercise in us. If we differ from that we were, then all is not well.

Signes of a
sleepy state.

2. Compare our selves againe with that state and frame that a Christian should be in; for sometimes a Christian goes under an uncomfortable condition, all the dayes of his life, so that he is not fit to make himselfe his patterne. The true rule is, that description that is in the word of a waking and living Christian, what should a man be,

SER. III.

Acts 9.39.

be, take him at the best, the varying from that is a sleepy estate; as for instance, A Christian should walke in the *Comfort of the Holy-Ghost*, live and walke by faith, he should depend upon God, and resist temptations. Faith should worke by love, and love to our selves should move us to honour our selves as members of Christ, to disdaine to defile our selves by siane: our hope if it be waking will purge us and make us suitable to the condition we hope for in Heaven, and the Company wee hope to have fellowship with there.

3. Again, looke to the examples of others that are more gracious. I have as many encouragementsto be thankfull to God, and fruitfull: They enjoy no more meanes then I, and yet they abound in assurance, are comfortable in all conditions: I am downe in a little trouble, subject to passion, to barrennesse, and distrust, as if there were no promises of God made to sowing in righteousness. Thus a man may discerne he is asleep, by comparing himselfe with othersthat are better then himselfe.

4. Again, it's evident that we are growing on to a sleepy condition by this, when we find a backwardnesse to spiritual duties, as to prayer,thanksgiving, and spirituall conference. It should be the joy of a Christian (as it is his prerogative) to come into the presence of Christ, and to be inable to doe that, that is above himselfe. When what is spirituall in a duty will not downe with us, it is a signe our soules are in a sleepy temper: there

There is not a proportion between the soule and the businesse in heavenly duties. Whom doe we speake too but God: whom do we heare speake in the Word but God? what should be the temper of those that speake to God, and heare him speake to them: It should be regardfull, reverent, observant: I hose that are watchfull to the eye of a Prince, what obseriance they shew, when they are to receive any thing from him, or to put up any request to him, *Offer this to thy King*, saith the Lord by Malachy: When a man comes drowsily to God, to sacrifice, to heare, to pray, &c. Offer this carriage to man, will he take it at thy hands? Oh the mercy of our patient God, that will endure such services as we most frequently performe! by this indisposednesse to duty more or lesse, may we discover our sleepinesse.

Mal. 1.8.

5. When the soule begins to admire outward excellencies, when it awakes much to profits, pleasures and honours, when men admire great men, rich men, great places, the strength and fat of the soule is consumed by feeding on these things, so that when it comes to spirituall things it must needs be faint and drowsie. By these and the like signes, let us labour to search the state of our soules.

1. And to stirre us up the more, Consider the danger of a secure sleepy estate. There is no sin but a man is exposed unto in a secure estate; therefore the Devill labours all he can to cast men into this temper, which he must doe before he can make him fall into any grosse sinne. When he is

Motives
against slee-
pineſſe.

I.

SER. III.

is asleep he is in a fit frame for any ill action, he is in a temper fit for the Devill to worke upon, to bring into any dreame or error, to inflame the fancies and conceits with outward excellencies. The Devill hath a faculty this way to make outward things great that are nothing worth; and to make such sins little, as if we were awake would affright us; he works strongest upon the fancy, when the soule is sleepy or a little drowsie.

There is no man that comes to grosse sins suddenly, but he falleth by little and little, first to slumber, and from slumber to sleep, and from sleep to security, and so from one degree to another: it is the inlet to all sinnes, and the beginning of all danger; therefore the Lord takes a contrary course with his, when he would preserve a state or person, he plants in them first a spirit of faith to beleieve that there is such a danger, or such a good to be apprehended, upon watching and going on in a course befitting that condition, and then faith(if it be a matter of threatening)stirs up feare, which maketh up care and diligence. This is Gods method, when he intends the preservation of any.

2. A man in his sleep is fit to lose all, a sleepy hand lets any thing goe with ease. A man hath grace and comfort, he lets it goe in his spirituall sleepinesse, grace in a great measure, and the sense and comfort of it altogether. A Christian hath alwayes the divine nature in him that workes in some degree; yet notwithstanding in regard of his present temper and feeling, he may be in such

such a case, that he shall differ nothing from a reprobate ; nay, hee may come to feele more then any ordinary wicked man feeles whiles he lives in the world, as divers good Christians doe. And all this, through their carelesnesse, that they suffer themselves to be robbed of first beginnings, by yeelding to delights, company and contentments; feeding their conceits with carnall excellencies, so favouring corruptions, and flattering, that that is naught in them, they lose the comfort of all that is good : who would doe this for the gaining of a little broken sleep? I say, broken sleep ; for the better a man is, the more unquietly shall he sleep in such a state, he shall feele startlings and frights in the midst of his carnall delights if he belong to God.

3. Besides, God meets them with some crosses in this world, that they shall gaine nothing by it. There is none of Gods children that ever gained by yeelding to any corruption, or drowsinesse, though God sayed their soules. It is alwaies true, a secure state is a sure fore-runner of some great crosse, or of some great sinne. God cannot endure such a temper of soule, livelesse and unfeeling performances and sacrifices, to him that hath given us such encouragements: It must needs be distastefull to God when we goe drowsily and heavily about his worke. *Cursed is he that doth the worke of the Lord negligently,* if it were to sheath his sword in the bowels of his enemy, to which man is exceedingly prone, yet if it be not done with diligence and an eye to God, a man is cursed in it.

S.B.R. III.

4.

Luk. 1.74.

4. And it is an odious temper to God ; for doth not hee deserve cheerfull service at our hands ? hath he been a wildernesse to us ? doth he not deserve the marrow of our soules ? doth not his greatnessse require it at our hands , that our senses be all waking ? and doth not his mercy deserve, that our love should take all care to serve him that is so gracious and good to us ? Is it not the fruit of our redemption to serve him without feare in holinesse and righteousnesse all the daies of our lives ?

5.

5. It is a state not onely odious to God, but irksome to our owne spirits; the conscience is never fully at peace in a drowsie state, or in drowsie performances.

Likewise it is not gracefull to others, it breeds not love in them to good things, but dislike. Carnall men, let them see a Christian not carry himselfe waking as he should, though they be a thousand times worse themselves, yet notwithstanding they thinke it should not be so, such a course doth not sute with so much knowledge and so much grace.

Let a man consider, wherefore God hath given the powers of the soule and the graces of the Spirit, are they not given for exercise, and to be employed about their proper objects ? A man is not a man, a Christian is not a Christian when he is not waking ; he so far degenerates from himselfe, as he yeelds unto any unbeseeming carriage. Wherefore hath God given us understanding, but to conceive the best things : wherefore have

have we judgement, but to judge aright between the things of heaven and earth? wherefore have we *love* planted in us, but to set it on lovely objects? wherefore *faith*, but to trust God over all? wherefore *hatred*, but to fly ill? wherefore have we *affections*, but for spiritual things? When therefore our affections are dull, and lose their edge to these things, being quick only to earthly things. What a temper is this? how doth a man answer his Creation, the state of a new Creature? Wherefore are all graces planted in the soule, as faith and love, and hope and patience; but to be in exercise, and waking; to have these, and to let them sleep, and lie unexercised, so far a Christian forgets himselfe, and is not himselfe, a Christian as a Christian, that is, in his right temper should be in the act and exercise of what is good in him, upon all occasions, as we say of God, he is a pure Act, because he is alwaies in working. The Spirit of God is a pure Act, in whom is no suffering, but all action, about that that is fit for so glorious a nature: So it is with the spirit of a man, that hath the Spirit of God; he is in act, in exercise, in operation: As the Spirit is more or lesse in him, so he is more or lesse in operation, more or lesse fruitfull. What a world of good might Christians doe, if they were in a right temper; what a deale of ill might they escape and avoid that they lie in, if they would rouze up their soules to be as Christians should be, and as their soule and conscience tells them, they ought and might be, did they rightly improve the meanes they have.



The fourth Sermon,

CANT. V. VER. II.

I sleep, but my heart wakes, &c.



He words as it hath been shewed, containe a *Confession*, *I sleep*, and a *Correction*, *my heart waketh*. The confession hath been handled, now something of the correction, or exception.

My heart waketh.

The word *heart* you know includesthe whole soule, forthe *understanding* is the heart, *an understanding heart*. To lay things up in our *hearts*, there it is *memory*, and to *cleave in heart* is to cleave in *will*. To *rejoyce in heart*, that is, in the *affection*, so that all the powers of the soule, the inward man (as *Paul calleth it*) is the heart.

I sleep, but my heart waketh.

Indeed, the Church might have said, *my heart sleepeth, but my heart waketh*; for it is the same faculty, the same power of the soule, both in the state of corruption, and of grace, in which the soule is, as in the twy-light, we cannot say, this is light,

light, and that is darknesse, because there is such a mixture. In all the powers of the soule there is something good, and something ill, something flesh, and something spirit. The heart was asleep, and likewise was awake. *I sleep, but my heart waketh.* You see here then first of all in this correction, That a Christian hath two principles in him, hat which is good, and hat which is evill, whence issueth the weaknesse of his actions and affections : They are all mixed, as are the principles from which they come forth. We may observe further, That a Christian man may know how it is with himselfe, though he be mixed of flesh and spirit ; he hath a distinguishing knowledge and judgement, whereby he knowes both the good and evill in himselfe. In a dungeon where is nothing but darknesse, both on the eye that should see, and on that which should be seen, he can see nothing ; but where there is a supernaturall principle, where there is this mixture, there the light of the Spirit searcheth the darke corners of the heart : A man that hath the Spirit knoweth both, he knoweth himselfe and his owne heart. The Spirit hath a light of its owne, even as Reason hath, how doth Reason know what it doth ? By a reflect Act inbred in the soul. Shall a man that is naturall reflect upon his state, and know what he knowes, what he thinks, what he doth, and may not the soule that is raised to an higher estate know as much ? undoubtedly it may. Besides, we have the Spirit of God, which is light, and selfe-evidencing, it

SER. III.

Observ. 1.

Observ. 2.

SER. IIII.

*How the differ-
ning worke of
the Spirit com-
meth to be so in-
terrupted.*

shewes unto us, where it is, and what it is. The work of the Spirit may sometimes be hindered, as in times of temptation, then I confesse a man may looke wholly upon corruption, and so mistake himselfe, in judging by that which he sees present in himselfe, and not by the other principle, which is concealed for a time from him. But a Christian, when he is not in such a tempration, he knowes his owne estate, and can distinguish between the principles in him, of the flesh and Spirit, grace and nature.

Againe we see here, in that the Church saith, *but my heart waketh*, that she doth acknowledge there is good aswell as evill : As the Church is ingenious to confess that which is amisse, *I sleep*, so she is as true in confessing that which is good in her selfe; *but my heart waketh*, which yeelds us another observation.

Wee should as well acknowledge that which is good, as that which is evill in our hearts.

Because we must not beare false witnesse (as not against others) much lesse against our selves. Many help Satan the accuser, and plead his cause against the Spirit their Comforter, in refusing to see what God seeth in them. We must make conscience of this, to know the good as well as the evill, though it be never so little.

To come in particular, what is that good the Church here confesseth, when she saith, that *her heart waketh*? She in her sleepy estate, first hath her judgement found in that which is truth of persons,

Observ. 3.

*What the
Church ac-
knowlegeth in
her heart wa-
king, though
asleep.*

persons, things, and courses. Christians are not so benighted when they sleep, or given up to such a reprobate judgement, as that they discerne not differences : they can discerne that such are in a good way, and such are not ; that such meanes are good, and such are not : A Christian oft times is forced to doe worke out of judgement, in case his affections are asleep or distracted, and such works are approved of God, as they come from a right judgement and conviction, though the evill of them be chastised.

But all is not in the judgement. The childe of God asleep hath a working in the will, choosing the better part which he will cleave too, he hath a generall purpose *to please God in all things*, and no setled purpose in particular for to sleep thus : answerable to his judgement therefore he chooseth the better part and side, he ownes God, and his cause, even in evill times, cleaving in resolution of heart to the best wayes, though with weaknessse.

Take *David* in his sleepy time between his re-pentance, and his foule sinne : If one should have asked him what he thought of the waies of God, and of the contrary, he would have given you an answer out of sound judgement thus and thus : If you should have asked him what course he would have followed in his choice resolution and purpose, he would have answered favourly.

Againe, there remaineth affection answerable to their judgement, which though they finde, and feele it not for a time, it being perhaps scattered,

*A choice of
good remain-
eth in the will*

3.

*They retaine
affection an-
swerable to
their judgment.*

SER. IIII.

tered, yet there is a secret love to Christ, and to his cause, and side, joyned with joy in the welfare of the Church and people of God, rejoicing in the prosperity of the righteous, with a secret griefe for the contrary. The pulses will beat this way, and good affections will discover themselves, take him in his sleepy estate, the judgement is sound in the main, the will, the affections, the joy, the delight, the sorrow, this is an evidence his heart is awake.

4.
Conscience.

Prov. 15.15.

How the conscience in a sleepy temper is knowne to be awake.

2 Sam. 24.

1 Sam. 23.

The conscience likewise is awake; the heart is taken oft times for the conscience in Scripture, a good conscience (called a *merry heart*) is a continuall feast. Now the conscience of Gods children is never so sleepy, but it awaketh in some comfortable measure, though perhaps it may be deaded in a particular act, yet notwithstanding there is so much life in it, as upon speech or conference, &c. there will be an opening of it, and a yeelding at the length to the strength of spirituall reason, his conscience is not feared; David was but a little rowsed by *Nathan*, yet you see how he presently confessed ingeniously that he had sinned: So when he had numbred the people, his conscience presently smote him; and when he resolved to kill *Nabal* and all his family, which was a wicked, and carnall passion, in which there was nothing but flesh; yet when he was stopped by the advise, and the discreet counsell of *Abigail*, we see how presently he yeelded. There is a kind of perpetuall tendernesse of conscience in Gods people; all the difference is, of more, or lesse.

And

And answerable to these inward powers is the outward obedience of Gods children, in their sleepy estate ; they goe on in a course of obedience, though deadly and coldly, and not with that glory that may give others good example, or yeeld themselfes comfort , yet there is a course of good duties,his ordinary way is good, howsoever he may step aside, his fits may be sleepy when his estate is waking. We must distinguish between a state and a fit, a man may have an aguish fit in a sound body: The state of a Christian is a waking state in the inward man ; the bie courses he falleth into are but fits out of which he recovers himselfe.

Whence for use, let us magnifie the goodness of God, that will remaine by his Spirit, and let it stay to preserve life in such hearts as ours are, so prone to security and sleepinesse, let it put us in mind of other like mercifull and gracious doings of our God for us;that he gave his Spirit to us when we had nothing good in us ; when it met with nothing but enmity, rebellion, and indisposednesse : Nay, consider how he debased himselfe and became man,in being united to our fraile flesh after an admirable nearnesse, and all out of mercy to save us.

If so be that Satan shall tempt us in such occasions, *let us enter into our owne seules, and search the truth of Grace,* our judgement, our wils, our constant course of obedience, and the inward principle whence it comes, that we may be able to stand in the time of temptation. What upheld
the

SER. IIII.

5.

*So they retaine
also a course of
obedience.*

*That we may
distinguish be-
tween states
and fits.*

Use 1.

Use 2.

SER. III.

the Church, but this reflect act by the help of the Spirit, that she was able to judge of the good, as well as of the ill. Thus David, *The desires of our souls are toward thee*; and though all this have befallen us, yet have we not forgotten thy Name, *Psal. 44.20.* This wil inable us to appeale to God as Peter, *Lord thou knowest I love thee*, it is an evidence of a good estate.

My heart waketh.

Obseru.

1 Pet. 1.
Mat. 26.

Gods children never totally fall from grace, though they sleep, yet their heart is awake. The Prophet *Esay* speaking of the Church and children of God, *Isa. 6.13.* saith, *It shall be as a tree, as an oake whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves.* Though you see neither fruit, nor leaves, yet there is life in the root, *The seed remains in them*, there is allway a seed remaining, it is an immortall seed that we are begotten by. Peter when he denied his Master, was like an Oake that was weather beaten, yet there was life still in the root : For questionlesse Peter loved Christ from his heart. Sometimes a Christian may be in such a poore case as the spirituall life runneth all to the heart, and the outward man is left destitute : As in wars, when the enemy hath conquerred the field, the people run into the City ; and if they be beaten out of the City they run into the Castle: the grace of God sometimes failes in the outward action, in the field, when yet it retireth to the heart, in which fort it is impregnable, *My heart waketh.*

When the outward man sleeps, and there are
weake

weake dull performances, and perhaps actions amisse too, yet notwithstanding *the heart waketh*: As we see in a swound or great scares, the bloud spirits and life, though they leave the face and hands, &c. yet they are in the heart. It is said in the Scripture of *Eutichus*, *his life is in him still, though he seemed to be dead*. As Christ said of *Lazarus*, so a man may say of a Christian in his worst state, *his life is in him still, he is not dead, but sleeps, his heart waketh*.

This is a sound Doctrine and comfortable, agreeable to Scripture, and the experience of Gods people, we must not lose it therefore; but make use of it against the time of temptation. There are some pulses that discover life in the sickest man, so are there some breathings and spirituall motions of heart, that will comfort in such times. These two never faile on Gods part, his love, which is unchangeable, and his grace a fruit of his love; And two on our part, the impression of that love, and the gracious worke of the new creature. *Christ never dies* (saith the Apostle) as he never dyes in himself (after his Resurrection) so he never dyes in his children, there is alwayes spirituall life.

The heart waketh.

This is a secret of Gods Sanctuary, onely belonging to Gods people, others have nothing to doe with it; they shall ever love God, and God will ever love them. The Apostle, *1 Cor. 14.8.* saith, *Love never failes.* Gifts you know shall be abolished, because the manner of knowing we now

Simile.
Act. 20.9.
Ioh. 11.

Observ.

Use for comfort.

SER. III.

now use shall cease, we see through a glasse, &c. but love abideth. Doth our love to God abide for ever, and doth not his love to us whence it commeth? ours is but a reflection of Gods love. Let us comfort our selves therefore in this for the time to come, that in all the uncertainty of things in this life, we have to day, and lose to morrow; as we see in Job, there is somewhat a Saint may build on that is constant & unmoveable. *I am the Lord, I change not, therefore you sonnes of Jacob are not consumed.* God should deny himselfe (as it were) which he cannot do, and his own constant Nature, if he should vary this way.

A Christian is what his heart and inward man is. It is a true speech of Divines, God and Nature begin there. Art begins with the face, and outward lineaments, as hypocrisy, outward painting, and expressions: But grace at the Center, and from thence goes to the Circumference; And therefore the Church values her selfe here by the disposition, and temper of her heart. Thus I am for my outward carriage, &c. *I sleep, but my heart that waketh.*

Therefore let us enter into our consciences and soules for the tryall of our estates, how it is with our judgements: Doe wee allow of the wayes of God, and of the Law of the inward man? How is it with our affections, and bent to good things? How with our hatred, our zeale? Is it not more for outward things, then for inward? We know what Iehu said to Ionadab, when he would have him into his Chariot, *Is thine heart*

as mine, then come to me ? So saith Christ, is thine heart as mine, then give me thy hand, but first God must have our hearts, and then our hands : A man otherwise is but a Ghost in Religion, which goes up and downe without a spirit of its owne, but a picture, that hath an outside, and is nothing within. Therefore especially, let us looke to our hearts, *oh that there were such an heart in this people* (saith God to Moses) *to feare me alwayes for their good.* This is it that Gods children desire, that their hearts may be aright set. *Wash thy heart O Ierusalem* (saith the Prophet) *from thy wickednesse, &c.* Indeed all the outward man depends upon this; therefore Satan, if he can get this fort, he is safe, & so Satans Vicar. It was a watch-word that was in *Gregory 13.* his time, in *Q Elizabeths dayes,* *My son, give me thy heart,* dissemble, goe to Church, and doe what you will, but *Damhi cor,* be in heart a Papist, and goe where you will. God is not content with the heart alone (the Devill knowes if he have the heart, he hath all: But God, as he made all, both soule and body, he will have all) but yet intimes of temptation, the chiefe tryall is in the heart.

And from hence, we have a maine difference between one Christian and another. A sound Christian doth what he doth from the heart, he begins the worke there. What good he doth, he loves in his heart first, judgeth it to be good, and then he doth it.

An Hypocrite doth that he doth outwardly, and allowes not inwardly of that good he doth ; he

Heb. 11.

he would doe ill, and not good, if it were in his choice. The good that he doth is for by-ends, for correspondence, or dependance upon others, or conformity with the times, to cover his designes under formality of Religion, that he may not be knowne outwardly, as he is inwardly, an Atheist, and an Hypocrite. So he hath false aymes, his heart is not directed to a right marke; But it is otherwise with Gods childe, whatsoever good he doth, it is in his heart first: Whatsoever ill he abstaines from, he doth it from his heart, judging it to be naught; therefore he hates it, and will not doe it. Here is a maine difference of the Church from all others, It wakes in the heart, though the outward man sleeps: But other mens hearts sleep, when they wake, as you know some men will walke and doe many things in their sleep. An Hypocrite is such a kind of man, he walks and goes up and downe, but his heart is asleep, he knowes not what he doth, nor doth he the thing out of judgement, or love, but as one asleep (as it were) he hath no inward affection unto the things he doth. A Christian is the contrary, his heart is awake, when he is asleep.

Another difference from the words you may have thus. A Christian by the power of Gods Spirit in him, is sensible of the contrarieties in him, complaines, and is ashamed for the same; but an Hypocrite is not so, he is not sensible of his sleepinesse; *I sleep* (saith the Church) so much as the Church saith she slept, *so much she did not sleep*; for a man that is asleep, cannot say he is asleep,

asleep, nor a dead man that he is dead : *Sofarre as he saith he is asleep, he is awake.* Now the Church confesseth that she was *asleep*, by that part that was *awake* in her, other men doe not complaine, are not sensible of their sleepinesse and slumbering, but compose themselves to slumber, and seeke darknesse, which is a friend of sleep, they woulde willingly be ignorant, to keep their conscience dull, and dumbe as much as they can, that it may not upbraid them. This is the disposition of a Carnall man, he is not sensible of his estate, as here the Church is.

SER. III.

A waking state is a blessed state.

The Church you see supponis and comforts her selfe, that she was waking in her inward man, that she was happy in that respect. How shall we doe to keep & preserve our soules in this waking condition, especially in these drowsie times ?

1. Propound unto them waking considerations. What causeth our sleeps, but want of matters of more serious observation? None will sleep when a thing is presented of excellency more then ordinary. To see and know, and thinke of what a state we are now advanced unto in Christ, what we shall be ere long, yea the fearefull estate we should be in, if God leave us to our selves ? A state of astonishment, miserable and wretched, beyond speech, nay beyond conceit. Thus did the blessed soules in former times exercise their thoughts, raise and stirre them up by meditation, that so they might hold their soules in a high esteeme of the best things, and not suffer them to sleep.

Observ.

Quest.

Answ.

I. *Meanes.*
*Is to propound
waking consi-
derations.*

SER. IIII.

Heb. 11.

2 Consideration

Luk. 19.42.
Mat. 23.37.

John 5.

3 Consideration

2 Cor. 5.11.

sleep. We never fall to sleep in earthly and carnall delights, till the soule let its hold goe of the best things, and ceaseth to thinke of, and to wonder at them. What made *Moses* to fall from the delights of Egypt : he saw the basest things in Religion were greater then the greatest things in the Court, yea in the World. *He esteemed the reproach of Christ better then the greatest treasures of Egypt.*

Make the heart thinke of the shorntesse, and vanity of this life, with the uncertainty of the time of our death ; and of what wondrous consequent it is to be in the state of Grace before we die. *The uncertainty of the gales of Grace,* that there may be a good houre, which if we passe, we may never have the like againe. As the Angell descended at a certaine houre into the poole of Bethesda, when those that entred not immediately after, went away sicke as they came : So there are certayne good houres, which let us not neglect, this will helpe to keep us waking. *The necessity of Grace,* and then the free dispensing of it in Gods good time, and withall the terrorre of the Lords day, *Remembering (saith Saint Paul) the terrorre of the Lord, I labour to stirre up al men, &c.* Indeed it should make us stirre up our hearts, when we consider the terrorre of the Lord, to thinke that ere long we shall be all drawne to an exact account, before a strict, precise Judge ; And shall our eyes then be sleeping and carelesse ? These and such like considerations out of spirituall wisedome we should propound to our selves, that so we might have

have waking soules, and preserve them in a right temper.

S. III.

The soule is as the object is that is presented ^{by} it, and as the certainty of the apprehension is of that object. It conduceh much therefore to the awakening of the soule to keep faith awake. It's not the greatnessse alone, but the presence of great things that stirs us; now it is the nature of faith to make things powerfully present to the soule; for it sets things before us in the word of *Iehovah*, that made all things of nothing, and is Lord of his word, to give a being to whatsoever he hath spoken. Faith is an awakening Grace, keep that awake, and it will keep all other graces waking.

Heb. 11.

When a man beleeves, that all these things shall be on fire ere long, that *Heaven* and *Earth* shall fall in peeces, that we shall be called to give an account, before that time we may be taken away. Is it not a wonder we stand so long, when Cities, stone wals fall, and Kingdomes come to sudden periods? When faith apprehends, and sets this to the eye of the soule, it affects the same marvellously; therefore let faith set before the soul some present thoughts according to its temper; sometimes terrible things to awaken it out of its dulnesse; sometimes glorious things, *Promises*, and *Mercies*, to waken it out of its sadnessse, &c. When we are in a prosperous estate, let faith make present all the sinnes and temptations that usually accompany such an estate, as pride, security, selfe-applause and the like: If in adversity, thinke also of what sinnes may beset us there,

SER. IIII.

this will awaken up such graces in us, as are futa-
nall to such an estate, for the preventing of such
hnes and temptations, and so keep our hearts in
be exercise to godlineſſe ; then which, nothing will
more prevent sleeping.

3. Meanes.

To labour for a
great measure
of the Spirit of
God.

And withall, labour for abundance of the Spirit of
God; for what makes men sleepy and drowsie? the
want of spirits, we are dull, and overladen with
grosse humors, whereby the strength sinkes and
failes? Christians should know, that there is a ne-
cessity, if they will keep themselves waking, to
keep themselves spirituall. Pray for the Spirit
above all things, it is the life of our life, the soule
of our soule. What is the body without the soul,
or the soule without the Spirit of God? even a
dead lump. And let us keep our selves in such
good wayes, as we may expect the presence of
the Spirit to be about us, which will keep us
awake.

4. Meanes.

To keep our
selues in the
light.

We must keep our selves in as much light as may
be; for all sleepinesſe comes with darkenesſe : Let
us keep our soules in a perpetuall light, when any
doubt or darke thought ariseth, upon yeelding
thereunto comes a sleepy temper; sleepinesſe in
the affections ariseth from darkenesſe of judge-
ment, the more we labour to increase our know-
ledge, and the more the spirituall light and
beamſes of it ſhine in at our windowes, the better
it will be for us, and the more ſhall we be able to
keep awake. What makes men in their corrup-
tions to avoid the Miniftary of the Word, or any
thing that may awake their conſciences? It is
the

the desire they have to sleep, they know, the more they know, the more they must practise, or else they must have a galled conscience: They see Religion will not stand with their ends, rich they must be, and great they will be; but if they suffer the light to grow upon them, that will tell them they must not rise and be great, by these and such courses. A gracious heart will be desirous of spirituall knowledge especially, and not care how neare the Word comes: because they ingeniously and freely desire to be spiritually better; they make all things in the world yeeld to the inward man; they desire to know their owne corruptions and evils more and more, and therefore love the light *as children of the light, and of the day, I Thes. 5.* Sleep is a worke of darknesse, men therefore of darke and drowsie hearts desire darknesse for that very end, that their consciences may sleep.

Labour to preserve the soule in the feare of God; because feare is a waking affection, yea one of the wakefullest: For, *Naturally we are more moved with dangers, then stirred with hopes;* therefore, that affection that is most conversant about danger, is the most rowzing and waking affection. Preserve therefore the feare of God by all meanes. It is one Character of a Christian, who, when he hath lost almost all Grace (to his feeling) yet the feare of God is alwayes left with him; he feares sin, and the reward of it; and therefore God makes that awe the Bond of the New Covenant. *I will put my feare into their hearts, that they*

5. Meanes.

Icr. 32.39.

SER. IIII.

*Who are the
best Christians.*

I shall never depart from me. One Christian is better than another, by how much more he wakes, and feares more then another. Of all Christians, marke those are most gracious, spirituall, and heavenly, that are the most awefull, and carefull of their speeches,courses, and demeanors : tender,even of offending God in little things. You shall not have light and common oathes come from them,nor unsavoury speeches. Sometimes a good Christian may in a state of sleepinesse be faulty some way: But he growes in the knowledge of the greatnessse of God, and the experience of his owne infirmities, as he growes in the sense of the love of God. He is afraid to lose that sweet Communion any way, or to grieve the Spirit of God : Therefore, alwayes *as a man growes in grace, he growes in awfulness, and in jealousy of his owne corruptions.* Therefore, let us preserve by all meanes this awefull affection, the fear of God: Let us then often search the state of our own soules,our going backward or forward; how it is between God and our soules ; how fit we are to die, and to suffer : how fit for the times that may befall us : Let us examine the state of our own souls,which wil preserve us in a waking estate, especially examine our selves in regard of the sinnes of the place , and the times where we live;of the sins of our owne inclination,how we stand affected and byased in all those respects, and see how jealous we are of dangers in this kind. Those that will keep waking soules, must consider the danger of the place where they

they live, and the times; what sinnes raigne: what sinnes such a company as they converse with are subje^t unto, and their owne weakness to be lead away with such temptations? This jealousie is a branch of that feare, that we speake of before, arising from the searching of our owne hearts and dispositions. It is a notable means to keep us awake when we keep our hearts in feare of such sinnes as either by calling, custome, company, or the time we live in, or by our owne dispositi-
on we are most prone too.

There is no Christian, but he hath some spe-
ciall sinne to which he is more prone then to an
other, one way or other, either by course of life,
or complection. Herenow is the care & watch-
fulness of a Christian Spirit, that knowing by
examination, and tryall of his owne heart, his
weaknesse, he doth especially fence against that,
which he is most inclined to; and is able to speak
most against that sinne of all others, and to bring
the strongest arguments to dishearten others
from practise of it.

In the last place, it is a thing of no small con-
sequence, that we keep company with waking
and faithfull Christians, such as neither sleep
themselves, or doe willingly suffer any to sleep
that are neare them.

It is a report, and a true one of the sweating
sicknes, that they that were kept awake by those
that were with them escaped; but the sicknesse
was deadly if they were suffered to sleep. It is
one of the best fruits of the Communion of

6. Meanes.
*The Commu-
nion of Saints.*

SER. IIII.

Saints, and of our spirituall good acquaintance to keep one another awake. Its an unpleasing worke on both sides : But we shall one day cry out against all them that have pleased themselves and us, in rocking us asleep, and thank those that have pulled us *with feare* out of fire, though against our wils.

Let us labour upon our ewne hearts in the conſcionable uſe of all theſe meaneſ, in their ſeverall times and ſeafons, that we may keep our hearts waking, and the more earnest ought we to be from conſideration of the preſent age and ſeafon in which we live.

Certainly a drowsie temper is the moſt ordinary temper in the world : For would men ſuffer idle words, yea filthy and rotten talkē to come from their mouthes if they were awake? Would a waking man run into a pit ? or upon a ſwords point ? A man that is asleep may doe any thing. What doe men meane when they feare not to lye, diſſemble, and rush upon the pikes of Gods diſpleaſure ? When they ſay one thing and doe another, are they not dead ? or take them at the beſt, are they not asleep ? Were they awake, would they ever doe thus? Will not a towle that hath wings avoid the ſnare ? or will a beaſt run into a pit when it ſees it ? There is a ſnare laid in your Play-houſes, gaming-houſes, Common-houſes that Gentlemen frequent that generally profeſſe Religion, and take the Communion. If the eye of their ſoules were awake, would they run into theſe ſnares, that their owne conſciences tell

tell them are so ? If there be any goodnesse in their soules, it is wondrous sleepy ; There is no man (even the best) but may complaine something, that they are overtaken in the contagion of these infectious times ; they catch drowsie tempers (as our Saviour saith) of those latter times : *For the abundance of iniquity, the love of many shall waxe cold.* A chill temper growes ever from the coldnesse of the times that we live in, wherein the best may complaine of coldnesse, but there is great difference. The life of many, we see, is a continuall sleep.

Let us especially watch over our selves in the use of liberty and such things as are in themselves lawfull. It is a blessed state, when a Christian carries himselfe so in his liberty, that his heart condemnes him not for the abuse of that which it alloweth, and justly in a moderate use. Recreations are lawfull, who denies it ? To refresh a mans selfe, is not only lawfall, but necessary. *God knew it well enough :* Therefore hath allotted time for sleep, and the like. *But we must not turne Recreation into a Calling,* to spend too much time in it.

Where there is least feare, there is most danger alwayes. Now because in lawfull things there is least feare, *we are there in most danger.* It is true for the most part, *Licitis perimus omnes,* more men perish in the Church of God by the abuse of lawfull things, then by unlawfull, more by meat, then by poison : Because every man takes heed of poison, being he knowes the ve-

SER. III.

*The excellency
of a waking
Christian.*

Mark. 13.37.

nomē of it, but how many men surfeſt, and dye by meat? ſo many men die by lawfull things, they eternally perish in the abuse of their liberties, more then in groſſe ſins. Therefore let us keep awake, that we may carry our ſelves ſo in our liberties, that we condenme not our ſelves in the uſe of them. We will conclude this point with the Meditation of the *Excellency* of a waking Christian, when he is in a right temper, he is an excellent person, fit for all affaies, he is then impregnable: Satan hath nothing to doe with him, for he (as it is ſaid) is then a *wife man* and *hath his eyes in his head*; he knowes himſelfe, his ſtate, his enemies, and adverſaries, the ſnares of Proſperity, and Adverſity, and of all conditions, &c. Therefore he being *awake*, is not overcome of the evill of any condition, and is ready for the good of any estate. He that hath a waking ſoule, he ſees all the advantages of good, and all the ſnares that might draw him to ill. What a bleſſed estate is this! In all things therefore watch: in all estates, in all times, and in all actions. There is a danger in every thing without watchfulneſſe. There is a Scorpion under every ſtone (as the Proverbe is) a ſnare under every bleſſing of God, and in every condition, which Satan uſeth as a weapon to hurt us. *Adverſity* to diſcourſe us, *Proſperity* to puſſe us up. When, if a Christian hath not a waking ſoule, Satan hath him in his ſnare; In *Proſperity* to be proud and ſecure; In *Adverſitie* to murmur, repine, be dejected, and call Gods *Providenſe* into queſtion. When a Christian

Christian hath a heart, and grace to awake, then his *Love*, his *Patience*, his *Faith* is awake, as it should be, he is fit for all conditions to doe good in them, and to take good by them.

Let us therefore labour to preserve watchfull and waking hearts continually, that so we may be fit to live, to die, and to appeare before the judgement seat of God ; to doe what we should doe, and suffer what we should suffer, being squared for all estates whatsoever.



The fifth Sermon.

C A N T . V . V E R . I I .

*It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying,
Open to me, my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my
Vndefiled: For my head is filled with dew, and my
locks with the drops of the Night.*



Ithereto by Gods assistance, we have heard largely, both of the *Churches sleeping*, and *Heart-waking*. What this *sleeping*, and *Heart-waking* is ; How it comes, the tryals of these opposite dispositions ; of the danger of *sleeping*, and excellency of *Heart-waking* ; and of the helps and means, both to shun the one, and preserve

SER. V.

Psal. 24.

serve the other. Now the Church having so freely and ingeniously confessed what she could against her self, proceeds yet further to acquaint us with the particulars in her heart-waking disposition : Which were two-fold, she heard and discerned *the voice of her Beloved*, who for all her sleep, was her Beloveds still, and more then that, she remembers all his sweet words and allurements, whereby he pressed her to open unto him, saying, *Open to me my Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled*, which is set out, and amplified with a further moving argument of those inconveniences Christ had suffered in his waiting for entertainment in her heart. *For my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night.* All which aggravates her offence, and his rare goodness, and patience towards miserable sinners, so to wait from time to time for admission into our wretched soules, that he may rule and governe them by his holy Spirit. Therefore we had great need to shun this sleepy distemper of soul, which for the present so locks up *the everlasting gates of our soule, that the King of glory cannot enter in*; and to strive for this blessed heart-waking disposition, which may help us at all times to see our dangers, and by Gods blessing recover us out of them, as here the Church doth at length, though first smarting and well beaten by *the watch-men*, in a world of perplexities, ere she can recover the fence of her former union, and Communion with Christ.

And surely, we finde by experience, what a woefull

woefull thing it is for the soule, which hath once tasted how gracious the Lord is, to be long without a sence of Gods love: For when it looks upon sinne, as the cause of this separation; this is for the time, as so many deaths unto it. Therefore the Churches experience must be our warning-peece to take heed how we grieve the Spirit, and so fall into this spirituall sleep: Wherein yet this is a good signe, that yet we are not in a desperate dead sleep, when we can with her say,

*It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks, saying,
open unto me, &c.*

In which words you have,

1. *The Churches acknowledgement of Christ's voice.*
 2. *Of his carriage towards her.*
 1. *Her acknowledgement is set downe here. It is the voice of my Beloved.*
 2. *His carriage, He knocks, &c. wherein,*
 1. *His Patience in suffering things unworthy and utterly unbeseeching for him. He doth not onely knocke, but he continues knocking, till his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night.*
 2. *His friendly Compellation, open to mee my love, my dove, my undefiled. Loe here are sweet actions, sweet words, and all to melt the heart of the Spouse.*
 - *First, the Churches acknowledgement is to be considered, confessing, It is the voice of her Beloved. The first thing to be observed in this acknowledgement is, That the Church however sleepy*

SER.V.

sleepy and drowsie she was; yet notwithstanding her heart was so far awake, as to know the voice of her husband. The point is this,

Observe.

That a Christian soule doth know and may discerne the voice of Christ, yea and that even in a lazie, sleepy estate. But much more when in a good and lively frame.

Ioh. 10.

*Gods Believers are Christs sheep : Now my sheep (faith Christ) heare my voice. It is the eare-maik (as it were) of a Christian, one of the Characters of the new man, *To taste words by the eare* (as Iob faith) he hath a spirituall taste, a discerning relish in his eare, because he hath the Spirit of God, and therefore relisheth what is connaturall, and suitable to the Spirit. Now the *voice* of Christ without in the ministry, and the *Spirit of Christ* within in the heart, are connaturall and suitable each to other.*

Difference of Christians by a spirituall taste in hearing.

And surely so it is, That this is one way to discerne a true Christian from an other, even by a tast in hearing : For those that have a spirituall relish, they can heare with some delight things that are most spirituall. As the Heathen man said of a medow, that some creatures come to eat one sort of herbs : others an other, all that which is fit for them; Men to walke therein for delight ; All for ends suitable to their nature. So in comming to heare the Word of God ; some cometo observe the elegancy of words and phrases ; some to catch advantage (perhaps) against the speaker, men of a devillish temper; and some to conforme themselves to the custome of the places they live

live in ; or to satisfie the clamours of a troubled conscience, that will have some divine duty performed, else it goes on with much vexation. But every true Christian comes, and relisheth what is spirituall : And when outward things can conveigh in similitudes spirituall things aptly to the minde, he relisheth this not as elegant and pleasing his fancy so much, as for conveighing the voice of Christ unto his soule. So that a man may much be helpt to know his state in Grace, and what he is by his eare : *Itching eares* usually are such as are led with lust, as the Apostle saith, and they must be clawed. They are sick and nothing will downe with them, they quarrell with every thing that is wholesome (as they did with *Manna*) no Sermons will please them, no bread is fine and white enough. Whereas indeed, it is their owne distemper is in fault. As those that goe in a ship upon the Sea ; it is not the tossing, but the stomacke, that causeth a sicknesse, the choler within, and not the waves without : So the disquiet of these men that nothing will down with them, is from their owne distemper. If Christ himselfe were here a preaching, they would be sure to cavill at somthing, as then men did, when he preached in his owne person ; Because they labour of lusts, which they resolve to feed and cherish.

And againe, Observe it against our Adversaries : What say they ? How shall we know that the Word is the Word of God ? For this hereticke saith thus, and this interprets it thus. This
is

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is the common Objection of the great Rabbies amongst them in their writings, how we can know the Word to be Gods, consideringe there are such heresies in the Churches, and such contrariety of opinions concerning the Scriptures read in the Churches.

Ioh. 10.

Even thus to object & ask, is an argument and testimony, that these men have not the Spirit of Christ; for *His sheep know his voice*: who howsoever they cannot interpret all places of Scripture; yet they can discerne in the Scripture what is suitable food for them; or in the unfolding of the Scriptures, in preaching, they can discerne agreeable food for them, having a faculty to reject that which is not fit for nourishment, to let it goe. As there is in nature passages fit for concoction, and digestion, and for rejection: so there is in the soule to worke out of the Word, even out of that which is *bard*, yet wholesome, what is fit for the soule and spirit. If it be cast downe, it feeds upon the promises for direction, and consolation; and what is not fit nourishment that it rejects, that is, if it be of a contrary nature, *heterogeniall*. Therefore we answer them thus: That *Gods sheep heare his voice*, That his Word left in the Church (when it is unfolded) his Spirit goes together with it, breeding a relish of the Word in the hearts of people, whereby they are able to taste and relish it; and it hath a supernaturall power and Majesty in it, which carries its owne evidence with it. *How shall we know light to be light?* It carries evidence in its selfe that it is light.

Ioh. 2. 20.

light. How know we that the fire is hot ? because it carries evidence in it selfe that it is so. So if you aske, How we know the Word of God to be the Word of God? it carries in it selfe inbred Arguments and Characters, that the soule can say none but this Word can be the Word of God, it hath such a majesty and power to cast downe, and raise up, and to comfort, and to direct with such power and majesty, that it carries with it its owne evidence, and it is argument enough for it. And thus we answer them, which they can answer no way, but by cavils. Gods sheep heare the voice of Christ. He speakes, and the Church understands him, and a strangers voice they will not heare, Ioh. 10.5.

And indeed, this is the only sure way of understanding the Word to be of God, from an inbred Principle of the majesty in the Word, and a powerfull worke thereof on the soule it selfe, and an assent so grounded, is that which makes a sound Christian. If we should aske what is the reason there be so many, *that apostatize, fall away, grow prophane, and are so unfruitfull under the Gospell?* notwithstanding they heare so much as they doe; the answer is, their soules were never founded and bottomed upon this, that it is the Word of God, and Divine Truth ; so as to be able to say, I have felt it by experience, that it is the voice of Christ. Therefore they so soone Apostatize, let Jesuites, or seducers set upon them ; They were never perswaded from inbred Arguments, that the voice of Christ is the Word of God: others from strictnesse grow prophane, because

¹ Cor. 14.25.

² Cor. 10.4,5.

Why so many
apostatize.

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cause they were never convinced by the power and majesty of the truth in it selfe ; and then in the end they despaire, notwithstanding all the promises,because they were never convinced of the truth of them, they cannot say Amen to all the promises: But the Church can say confidently upon sound experience, *It is the voice of my Beloved,&c.*

Againe, Whereas the Church saith here, *It is the voicee of my Beloved,&c.* and knowes this voice of her Beloved, we may note,

That the Church of God, and every Christian takes notice of the meanes that God useth for their salvation.

A Christian is sensible of all the blessed helps he hath to salvation. To a dead heart, it is all one, whetherthey have meanes or no meanes, but a Christian soule takes notice of all the meanes. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh,* it seeth Christ in all.

And marke what the Church saith moreover, *It is the voice of my Beloved,* she acknowledgeth *Christ to be beloved of her;* though she were asleep. So then here is a distinction between the sleep of a Christian, and the dead sleep of another naturall man : The one when he sleeps, *His heart doth not onely awake, but it is awaks to discerne the voice of Christ;* it can relish in reading what is spirituall and good, what is savoury, and what not. And likewise take a Christian at the worst, when he is asleep, he loves Christ, he will doe nothing against him. *I can doe nothing (saith Paul) against the*

*A distinction
betwixt sleep
in divers Chris-
tians, even at
the worst, and
deadnesse in a
naturall man.*

the truth, but for the trut̄; he will doe nothing against the cause of Religion, there is a new Nature in him, that he cannot doe otherwise, he can- not but love, he cannot sinne with a full purpose, nor speake against a good cause, because he hath a new nature that leads him another way, Christ is her Beloveds still though she sleep.

Take a Christian at the lowest, his heart yearnes after Christ.

Acknowledging him to be his Beloved, There is a conjugall chastity in the soul of a Christian, holding firme to the covenant and marriage between Christ and it, he keeps that unviolable, though he may be untoward, sleepy, and drowsie, yet there is alwaies a conjugall, spouse-like affection. *It is the voice of my Beloved, &c.*

Now leaving the Churches notice of the voice of Christ, *We come to Christs carriage towards her.*

1. *He knocketh, and then we have,*

2. *His patience in that Carriage.*

My head is filled with d.w. and my lockes with the drops of the night, &c. Here is Patience and Mercy to endure this indignity at the Churches hand, to stand at her courtesies to come in, besides 3. the Compellation, afterwards to be spoken of. The generall observation from Christs carriage, is this,

That Christ still desires a further and farther Communion with his Church

Even as the true soule, that is touched with the Spirit, desires nearer and nearer Communion

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with Christ. So he seeks nearer and nearer Communion with his Spouse, by all sanctified means; Christ hath never enough of the soule; he would have them more and more open to him, our hearts are for Christ, who hath the heaven of heavens, and the soule of a beleeving Christian for himselfe to dwell in; he contents not himself to be in heaven alone, but he will have our hearts. He knocks here, waits, speaks friendly and lovingly with such sweet words, *My Love, my Dove, &c.* We had a blessed Communion in the state of innocency, and shall have a glorious Communion in heaven, when the marriage shall be consummated; but now the time of this life is but as the time of the contract, during which there are yet many mutuall passages of love between him and his Spouse, a desire of mutuall Communion of either side. Christ desires further entertainment in his Churches heart and affection, that he might lodge and dwell there: And likewise there is the like desire in the Church (when she is in a right temper) so that if any strangenesse be between Christ, & any mans soule, that hath tasted how good the Lord is, let him not blame Christ for it, for he delights not in strangenesse; *He that knocks, and stands knocking, while his locks are bedewred with the drops of the night?* Doth he delight in strangenesse, that makes all this love to a Christians soule? Certainly, No.

Therefore looke for the cause of his strangenesse at any time in thine owne selfe; As, whether we

*That the cause
of Christ's
strangenesse to
the Churche is in
our selves.*

we cast our selves imprudently into company, that are not fit to be consulted withall, in whom the Spirit is not, and who cannot doe us any good, or they cast themselves to us. Evill company is a great dampning, whereby a Christian loseth his comfort much, especially that intimate Communion with God, whence we may fall into security.

Againe, Discontinuing of Religious exercises doth wonderfully cause Christ to withdraw himselfe ; He makes no more love to our soules, when we neglect the meanes, and discontinue holy exercises, and religious company, when we stir not up the graces of Gods Spirit, being this way negligent, it is no wonder that Christ makes no more love to our soules, when we prize and value not the Communion that should be between the soule and Christ, as we should. Whom have I in heaven but thee ? Thy loving kindnesse is better then life (saith the Psalmist) when we prize not this, it is just with Christ to make himselfe strange. Where love is not valued and esteemed, it is estranged, and for a while hides it selfe. So that these with other courses, and failings, we may finde to be the ground and reason of the strangenesse between Christ and the soule ; for certainly the cause is not in him; for we see here, he useth all meanes to be entertained by a Christian soule, he knocks.

You know what he sayes to the Church of Laodicea, Rev. 3.20. Behold I stand at the doore, and knocke. So here, It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh ; therefore in such a case, search your

Psal. 73.25.

Psal. 63.3.

Lament. 3.

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That Christ takes not the advantage and forfeiture of the sins of his Church.
Rev. 3.20.

owne hearts, where if there be deadnesse, and desertion of Spirit, lay the blame upon your selves, and enter into a search of your owne wayes, and see what may be the cause.

Now to come more particularly to Christs carriage here knocking at the heart of the sleepy Church. We see, That *Christ takes not the advantage and forfeiture of the sins of his Church, to leave them altogether, but makes further and further love to them*, though the Church be sleepy, Christ continues knocking. The Church of *Laodicea* was a luke-warme, proud, hypocriticall Church; yet, Behold (saith Christ) *I stand at the doore, and knocke*, and it was such a Church as was vaine-glorious, and conceited. *I am rich, and want nothing, when she was poore, blind, and naked.* And here he doth not onely stand knocking, but he withall suffereth indignities, *the dew to fall upon him*, which we shall speake more of hereafter. Christ therefore refuseth not weake sinners, he that commands, *that we should receive him that is weake in the faith*, and not cast him off from our fellowship, and company, will he reject him that is weake and sleepy? No, what Father will passe by, or neglect his childe for some failings, and weaknesses, Nature will move him to respect him as his childe.

Now Christ is mercifull both by his office, and by his nature; our nature he tooke upon him, that he might be a mercifull Redeemer. And thenas God also he is love, *God is love*, that is, whatfoever God shewes himselfe to his Church,

Church, he doth it in *love*: If he be angry in correting, it is out of *love*: If *Mercifull*, it is out of *love*: If he be *Powerfull* in defending his Church, and revenging himselfe on our Enemies, all is *love*, *God is love* (*saint John*) that is, he shewes himselfe only in wayes, expressions and charaeters of *love* to his Church: So Christ, as God, is all *lovet* to the Church. And we see the Scriptures also to set out God as *love*, both in his *Essence*, and in his *Relations*, 1. In *Relations* of *love* to his Church, He is a *Father*, *As a Father pitteth his childe, so the Lord pitties them that feare him*; and 2. also in those sweet *Attributes* of *love*, which are his *Essence*, as we see, *Exod. 34.6.* When God describes himselfe to *Moses* after his desire to know him, in the former Chapter, *Thou canst not see me and live*; yet he would make him know him, as was fit for him to be knowne, *Iehovah, Iehovah, Strong, Mercifull, Gracious, Long-suffering, &c.* Thus God will be knowne in these *Attributes* of *Consolation*. So Christ as God, is all *love* and *mercy*: Likewise Christ as man, he was man for this end to be all *love* and *mercy*: Take him in his office, as *Iesus* to be a *Saviour*, he carrieth salvation in his wings, as it is, *Mal. 4.2.* both by *Office*, and by *Nature*.

And here how excellently is the expression of Christ's *mercy*, *love* and *patience* set out? *He knocks, my Beloved knocketh, &c.* saying, *He knocks for further entrance* (as was shewed before) some he had already, but he would have further: As you know we have divers rooms and

Ioh. 4.8.

Psal. 103.

Exod. 34.6.

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places in our houles; There is the court, the hall, the parlour, and closet : The hall for common persons, the parlour for those of better fashion, the closet for a mans selfe, and those that are intimate friends : So a Christian hath roome in his heart for worldly thoughts, but his closet, his inmost affections, are kept for his inmost friend Christ, who is not content with the hall, but will come into the very closet, he knockes that we should open, and let him come into our hearts, into our more intimate affections and love ; nothing will content him but intimatenesse, for he deserves it, as we shall see, he knocks for this end. But *how doth he knocke?*

*How Christ is
said to knocke
at our hearts.*

I.
By a voice.

Sometimes both
by voice and
knocking.

Every kind of way: It is taken from the fashion of men in this kinde (God condescending to speak to us in our own language) Sometimes you know, *There is a knocking or calling for entrance by voice*, when a voice may serve, and then there needs no further knocking.

Sometimes both by voice and knocking: If voice will not serve, knocking comes after : So it is here, Christ doth knocke, and speake, useth a voice of his Word, and knocks by his works, and both together sometimes, whether by works of mercy or of judgement, he labours to enter into the soule, to raise the sleepy soule that way ; he begins with mercy usually. 1. By mercies, All the creatures and blessings of God carry in them (as it were) a voice of God to the soule, that it would entertaine his love. There goes a voice of love with every blessing. And the love, the mercy,

cy, and the goodness of God in the creature, is better then the creature it selfe : As we say of gifts, *The love of the giver is better then the gift it selfe.* So the love of God in all his sweet benefits is better then the thing it selfe, and so in that we have, there is a voice (as it were) intreating us to entertaine God, and Christ in all his mercies, yea every creature (as one faith) and benefit speaks as it were thus to us; *We serve thee, that thou mayest serve him, that made thee and us.* There is a speech (as it were) in every favour, which mercies, if they cannot prevaile, then come corrections, which are the voice of God also : *Heare the rod, and him that smiteth ; but hath the rod a voice ?*

Yes, for what doe corrections speake, but amendment of the fault we are corrected for : so we must heare the rod, all corrections tend to this purpose, they are as knockings, that we should open to God and Christ. And because corrections of themselves will not amend us, God to this kinde of knocking, adds a voice, he teacheth, and corrects together. *Happy is that man that thou correctest, and teachest out of thy Law* (saith the Psalmist) Correction without teaching is to little purpose ; therefore God adds instruction to correction. He opens the conscience, so that it tells us it is for this that you are corrected, and together with conscience, gives his Spirit to tell us it is for this, or that you are corrected : you are too blame in this ; this you have done, that you should not have done : So that *Corrections are knockings;*

Micah 6.9.

2.
By the rod
which hath a
voice in cor-
rections.

Psal. 94. 10.

SER. V.

Lev. 26.24.

knockings ; but then especially when they have instruction thus with them. They are messengers from God, both Blessings and Corrections, *they will not away* (especially corrections) till they have an answer, for they are sent of God, who will add seven times more; and if the first be not answered, then he sends after them, he will be sure to have an answer, either in our Conversion, or Confusion, when he begins once.

3.
God knocketh
by the good ex-
amples of others
Luk. 13.2,3.
1 Cor. 10.

Many other wayes he useth to knocke at our hearts. *The examples of those we live among that are good, they call upon us,* The patternes of their holy life. The examples of Gods justice upon others, are speeches to us; God knocks at our doore then; He intends our correction, when he visits another, when if we amend by that, he needs not take us in hand.

4.
By his minis-
teriall knocking.

Eph. 4.

Luk. 10.17.

But besides all this, there is a more neare knocking, that Christ useth to the Church, *His ministeriall knocking*, when he was here in the dayes of his flesh, he was a Preacher and Prophet himselfe, and now he is ascended into heaven, he hath given gifts to men, and men to the Church, whom he speakes by to the end of the world, they are Christs mouth, as wee said of the pen-men of holy Scripture ; they were but the hand to write, Christ was the head to indite : So in preaching and unfolding the Word, they are but Christs mouth and his voyee (as it is said of John) Now he is in heaven, he speaks by them ; *He that heareth you, heareth me ; he that despiseth you, despiseth me.* Christ is either received

ved or rejected in his Ministers, as it is said of *Noah's* time, *The Spirit of Christ preached in the dayes of Noah to the soules now in prison, &c.* Christ as God did preach before he was incarnate by *Noah* to the old world, which is now in prison, in hell, because they refused to heare Christ speake to them by *Noah*: Much more now after the dayes of his flesh, that he is in heaven, he speaks and preacheth to us, which if we regard not, we are like to be in prison, as those soules are now in prison for neglecting the preaching of *Noah*, ^{1 Pet. 3.19.} So the Ministers are Christs mouth, when they speake he speaks by them, and they are as Embassadors of Christ (whom they should imitate in mildnesse) *We therefore as Embassadors beseech and intreat you, as if Christ by us should speake to you; so we intreat you to be reconciled unto God.* And you know what heart-breaking words the Apostle useth in all his Epistles (especially when he writes to Christians in a good state) as to the *Philippians*, *If there be any bowels of mercy, if there be any consolation in Christ, then regard what I say, be of one mind.* And among the *Thessalonians*, He was as a Nurse to them: So Christ speakes by them, and puts his owne affections into them, that as he is tender, and full of bowels himselfe, so he hath put the same bowels into those that are his true Ministers.

He speakes by them, and they use all kinde of meanes that Christ may be entertained into their hearts. They moove all stones (as it were) some-

² Cor. 5.20.

Phil. 1.2.

¹ Thes. 2.19.

SER. V.

Mat. 5.3.

¶ 5.
By the spirit.

sometimes threatenings ; sometimes intreaties ; sometimes they come as sons of thunder, sometimes with the still voice of sweet promises ; And because one man is not so fit as another for all varieties of conditions and spirits ; therefore God gives variety of gifts to his Ministers, that they may knocke at the heart of every man by their severall gifts : For some have more rowzing, some more insinuating gifts, some more Legall, some more Evangelicall spirits, yet all for the Churches good. John Baptist by a more thundering way of preaching , to make way for Christ to come , threateneth judgement. But Christ then he comes with a *Blessed are the poore in Spirit, Blessed are they that hunger and thirst for Righteousnesse, &c.* All kind of meanes have been used in the ministry from the beginning of the world.

And because of it selfe this ministry it is a dead letter ; therefore he joynes that with the Word, which knocks at the heart together with the Word, not severed from it, but is the life of it, *Oh the Spirit is the life and soule of the Word* ; and when the inward word, or voice of the Spirit, and the outward word or Ministry go together, then Christ doth more effectually knocke, and stir up the heart.

Now this Spirit with sweet inspirations knockes, mooves the heart, lightens the understanding, quickens the dull affections, and stirres them up to duty, as it is, *Isa. 20.21.* *And thine ears shall heare a voice behind thee, saying, This is the*

thy way, walke in it. The Spirit mooves us sweetly agreeable to our owne nature, it offers not violence to us: But so as in *Hosea 11.4.* *I drew them by the cords of a man;* that is, by reasons and motives be fitting the nature of man, motives of love: So the Spirit together with the word, works upon us, as we are men by rationall motives, setting good before us : If we will let Christ in to governe, and rule us; and by the danger on the contrary, so moving, and stirring up our affections: These be *the cords of a man.*

And besides his Spirit, God hath planted in us a *Conscience* to call upon us, to be his Vicar, a little god in us to doe his office, to call upon us, to direct us, checke, and condemne us, which in great mercy he hath placed in us.

Thus we see what meanes Christ useth here; *His voice, works, and word,* works of *Mercy* and of *Correction*, his *Word* together with his *Spirit*, and the *Conscience*, that he hath planted to be (as it were) a god in us, which together with his *Spirit* may moove us to duty. This *Austin* speaks of, when he saith, *Deus in me, &c. God spake in me oft, and I knew it not;* He meanes it of *Conscience*, together with the *Spirit*, stirring up motives to leave his sinfull courses. God knocked in me, and I considered it not. I cried, *modò, and modò, sine modo.* I put off God, now I will, and now I will, but I had no moderation, I knew no limits. And whilst Christ thus knocketh, all the three Persons may be said to doe it : For as it is said elsewhere, *that God was and is in Christ reconciling*

6.
*The Conscience
also knockes.*

*In his Con-
fessions.*

² *Cor. 5.19.*

SER.V.

Act. 20. 26.

Ioh. 5.

Obiect.

Answ.
*Why Christ
knocks, though
he hath power
to open to him-
selfe, and bids
us open. who
want power to
doe it.*

ling the world, &c. For whatsoever Christ did, he did it as anointed, and by office : And therfore God doth it in Christ, and by Christ, and so in some sort God died in his humane nature when Christ died. So here the Father beseecheth, when Christ beseecheth, because he beseecheth that is sent from him, and anointed of the Father. And God the Father stoops to us, when Christ stoops, because he is sent of the Father, and doth all by his Fathers command and commission. So besides his owne bowels, there is the Father and the Spirit with Christ, who doth all by his Spirit, and from his Father, from whom he hath commission. Therefore God the Father, Sonne, and Holy-Ghost knocke at the heart. *open to me my love, my dove, my undefiled,* but Christ especially by his Spirit, because it is his office.

But some may object, *Christ can open to himselfe, why doth he not take the key and open, and make way for himselfe? Who will knocke, when he hath the key himselfe? and who will knocke, when there is none within to open?* *Christ can open to himselfe, and we have no free-will, nor power to open?*

Bellarmino makes this objection, and speakes very rudely, that he is an unwise man to knocke, where there is no man within to open ; and that if Christ knocke, and we cannot open, it is a delusion to exhort to open, and that therefore there must needs be free-will in us to open.

The Answer is : First, Christ speakes to the Spouse here, and so many such exhortations are given

given to them that have the Spirit of God already, who could by the help thereof open : For good and gracious men are moved first by the Spirit, and then they moove; they are *Moti Moverentes*, and *Acti Agentes*. They are acted first by the Spirit, and then they doe act by it, not of themselves : as the inferiour Orbes moove not, but as they are mooved by the superiour. The Question is not of them in the state of Grace, but at their first conversion, when especially we say that Christ speaks to them that he meanes to convert, *He knocks at their hearts, and opens together with his speech*: Then there goes a power, that they shall open, for his words are operative wérds ; as it was in the Creation, *Let there be light*, it was an operative word, *and there was light*. Let there be such a Creature , it was an operative working word, and there was such a Creature presently : So he opens together with that Word. With that invitation and command, there goes an Almighty power to inable the soule to open; Were it not a wise reason to say, When Christ called to *Lazarus to come forth*, that we should reason he had life to yeeld to Christ , when he bad him come forth ? no, he was rotten in his grave almost; but with Christ speaking to *Lazarus*, there went an Almighty power, that gave life to him, by which life he heard what Christ said, *Arise Lazarus* : So Christ by his Spirit cloaths his word in the Minestery , when he speaks to people with a mighty power : as the Minister speaks to the eare, Christ speaks, opens, and unlocks the heart

Gen 1.3.

Ioh. 11.43.

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Acts 16.13.

*Quest.
Ans.**Bernard.*

heart at the same time, and gives it power to open, not from it selfe, but from Christ. *Paul* speaks to *Lydia's* eare, Christ to her heart, and opened it, as the Text sayes, whereby she belieues, so Christ opens the heart.

But, *Why doth he thus worke?*

Because he will preserve Nature, and the principles thereof, and so he deales with us, working accordingly; the manner of working of the reasonable creature, is to worke freely by a sweet inclination, not by violence. Therefore when he works the worke of Conversion, he doth it in a sweet manner, though i: be mighty for the Efficaciousnesse of it, he admonisheth us with intreathy, and perswasion, as if we did it our selves. But though the manner be thus sweet, yet with this manner there goeth an Almighty power. Therefore he doth it strongly, as comming from himselfe, and sweetly, as the speaking is to us preserving our Nature, so the Action is from him, which hath an Almighty power with it. As holy *Bernard* saith, *Thou dealest sweetly with my soule in regard of my selfe* (that is, thou workest upon me as a man with the words of love) *yet strongly in regard of thy selfe*. For except he adde strength with sweetnesse, the worke will not follow; but when there are both, an Almighty work is wrought in the soule of a Christian; and so wrought, as the manner of mans working is preserved in a sweet and free manner, whilest he is changed from contrary to contrary; And it is also with the greatest reason that can be, in that now

he

he sees more reason to be good, then in the dayes of darknesse he did to be naught. God works so sweetly. God speakes to us after the manner of men, but he works in us as the great God ; he speakes to us as a man in our owne language, sweetly ; but he works in us almightyly, after a powerfull manner, as God: so we must understand such phrases as these, *I knocke, open to me my Love, my Dove, &c.* we may take further notice,

That the heart of a Christian is the house, and Temple of Christ.

Hee hath but two houses to dwell in ; the Heavens, and the heart of an humble broken-hearted sinner.

Obseru.

Isa. 57.13.

Quest.

Answ:

How can Christ come into the soule ?

He comes into the heart by his Spirit ; It is a speciall entertainment that he lookest for : open thine eares that thou mayest heare my word: thy love, that thou mayest love me more : thy joy, that thou mayest delight in me more : open thy whole soule that I may dwell in it. A Christian should be Gods house, and a true Christian is the true Temple of God. He left the other two Temples therefore, but his owne body, and his Church he never leaves ; for a house is for a man to solace himselfe in, and to rest in, and to lay up whatsoever is precious to him : So with Christ a man will repaire his house, so Christ will repaire our souls, and make them better, and make them more holy and spirituall , and every way fit for such a guest as he is.

How

How shall we know whether Christ dwels in our hearts or not?

We may know by the servants what Master dwels in an house : If Christ be in the soule, there comes out of the house good speeches, and we watch the senses, so as there comes nothing into defile the soule, and disturbe Christ, and nothing goes out to offend God. When we heare men full of gracious sweet speeches, it is a signe Christ dwelst there : If we heare the contrary , it shewes Christ dwels not there , for Christ would move the whole man to doe that which might edifie and comfort.

Againe, where Christ comes, *A assistance comes there.* When Christ was borne, all *Ierusalem* was in an uproare: so when Christ is borne in the soul, there is an uproare , corruption armes it selfe against Grace, there is a combate betwixt flesh and Spirit, but Christ subdues the flesh by little and little. Gods image is stamped upon the soule where Christ is, and if we have opened unto the Lord of Glory, he will make us glorious.

Christ hath never enough of us, nor we have never enough of him, till we be in heaven, and therefore we pray, *Thy Kingdome come,* and till Christ comes in his Kingdome, he desires his Kingdome should come to us, *Open* (saith he) *Stupenda dignatio, &c.* (as he cryes out) it is a stupendious condescending , when he that hath Heaven to hold him, Angels to attend him, those glorious creatures; he that ha^t the command of every creature, that doe yeeld presently homage when

when he commands the Frogges, and Lice, and all the Host of Heaven are ready to doe his will ; for him to condescend, and to intreat us to be good to our owne soules, and to beseech us to be reconciled to him, as if he had offended us, who have done the wrong and not he ; or as if that we had power, and riches to doe him good : Here Greatnesse beseecheth Meanness, Riches, Poverty, All-sufficiency, Want, and Life it selfe, comes to dead drowsie soules. What a wondrous condescending is this ! Yet notwithstanding Christ vouchsafest to make the heart of a sinfull, sleepy man to be his House, his Temple. He knocks, and knocks here, saying, Open to me, &c.

This is usefull many wayes ; as first, cherish all the good conceits we can of Christ; Time will come, that the Devill will set upon us with sharp temptations, fiery darts, temptations to despair, and present Christ amissle, as if Christ were not willing to receive us, whenas you see he knocks at our hearts to open to him, useth Mercies and Judgements, the Ministry of his Spirit, and Conscience, and all ; Will not he then entertaine us, when we cometo him, that seeks this entertainment at our hands ? Certainly he will; therefore let us labour to cherish good conceits of Christ. This is the finisher and beginning of the conversion of a poore sinfull soule, even to consider the infinite love, and condescending of Christ Iesus for the good of our soules ? We need not wonder at this his willingness to receive us, when we first know, that God became man, happiness

S B R . V.
Gal. 3.13.

nesse became misery, and life it selfe came to die,
and to be a curse for us. He hath done the greater,
and will he not doe the lesse? Therefore thinke
not strange that he useth all these meanes, consider-
ing how low he descended into the wombe
of the Virgin for us, Eph. 4.9.

Isa. 61. 1.
Mat. 11. 28.
Isa. 55. 1.

Mat. 5. 3 5.

Use 2.

Now such considerations as these being mix-
ed with the Spirit, and set on by him, are effectu-
all for the conversion of poore soules. Is there
such love in God to become man, and to be a
Sutor to woe me for my love? Surely thinks the
soule then, he desires my salvation, and conver-
sion. And to what kind of persons doth he come?
None can object unworthiness, I am poore; he
comes to the poore: I am laden and wretched, Come
unto me all ye that are weary and laden: I have no-
thing, Come and buy honey, milke, and wine, though
you have nothing. He takes away all Objections.
But I am stung with the sense of my sins, Blessed
are they that hunger and thirst, &c. But I am emp-
ty of all, Blessed are the poore in Spirit. You can ob-
ject nothing, but it is taken away by the Holy-
Ghost, wisely preventing all the Objections of a sinfull soule. This is the beginning of conver-
sion, these very conceits; and when we are conver-
ted, these thoughts entertained with admiration of
Christs condescend ing, are effectuall to give Christ
further entrance into the soule, whereby a more
happy communion is wrought still more and
more between Christ and the soule of a Christi-
an.

Oh, but take heed that these make not any se-
cure:

cure : For if we give not entrance to Christ, all this will be a further aggravation of our damnation. How will this justify the sentence upon us hereafter, when Christ shall set us on the left hand, and say, *Depart from me*, for I invited you to come to me : I knocked at the doore of your hearts, and you would give me no entrance, *Depart from us* said you, therefore now, *Depart you from me*. What doe prophane persons in the Church? but bid Christ depart from them, especially in the motions of his Spirit, they entertain him in the cutward roome, the braine ; they know a little of Christ, but in the heart, the secret roome, he must not comether to rule. Is it not equall, that he should bid us, *Depart yee cursed, I know yee not*? you would not give entrance to me, I will not now to you ; as to the foolish Virgins he speaks ; and *Prov. i. 28.* Wisedome knocks, and hath no entrance, therefore in times of danger they call upon her, but she rejoyceth at their destruction ; Where God magnifies his mercy in this kind in sweet allurements, and inviting by Judgements, Mercies, Ministry, and Spirit, he will magnifie his Judgement after. Those that have neglected Heaven with the Prerogatives, and advantages in this kind, they shall be cast into Hell. *Woe to thee Chorazin, &c.* as you know in the Gospell. This is one thing that may humble us of this place and Nation, that Christ hath no further entrance, nor better entertainment after so long knocking : for the entertaining of his word is the welcomming of himself,

Mat. 25.

Mat. 23. 41.

Mat. 11. 11.

It is the voice of my Beloved

selfe, as it is, *Coloſſ. 3.16. Let the word of God dwell plentifully in you. And let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith, Ephes. 3.17.* Compare those places, let the word dwel plenteously in you by wisedome, and let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith: For then doth Christ dwell in the heart, when the truth dwels in us; therefore what entertainment we give to his truth, we give to himselfe. Now what meanes of knocking hath hee not used among us a long time? For *workes* of all sorts; he hath drawne us *by the cords of a man*, by all kinde of favours. For *Mercies*. How many deliverances have we had (No Nation the like, we are a miracle of the Christian world) from forraigne invasion, and domesticall conspiracies at home? How many mercies doe we enjoy? *Abundance together with long peace and plenty.* Besides, if this would not doe, God hath added corrections with all these, in every Element, in every manner, infection in the aire, Judgements in inundations; We have had rumors of warres, &c. threatenings, shakings of the rod onely, but such as might have awaked us: And then he hath knocked at our hearts by the example of other Nations. By what he hath done to them, he hath shewed us what he might justly have done to us, we are no better then they.

As for his Ministeriall knocking, above three-score yeares we have lived under the Ministry of the Gospell, this Land hath been *Goshen*, a Land of light, when many other places are in darknessse, especially we that live in this *Goshen*,
this

this place, and such like, where the light shines in a more abundant measure. Ministers have been sent, and variety of gifts, there hath been piping, and mourning (as Christ complaines in his time) that they were like foward children, that neither sweet piping, nor dolefull mourning would moove to be tractable to their fellowes, they had *John* who came mourning, and Christ comforting with blessing in his mouth, all kinde of meanes have been used.

Mat. 11.17.

And for the *Motions of his Spirit*, who are there at this time, who thus live in the Church under the Ministry, who cannot say that God thereby hath smote their hearts, those hard rocks againe and againe, and awaked their consciences, partly with corrections publike and personall, and partly with benefits ; yet notwithstanding what little way is given to Christ ? Many are indifferent and lukewarme either way, but rather incline to the worst.

Let us then consider of it, The greater means, the greater judgements afterwards, if we be not woon by them. Therefore let us labour to hold Christ, to entertaine him, let him have the best roome in our soules, to dwell in our hearts, let us give up the keyes to him , and desire him to rule our understandings, to know nothing but him, and what may stand with his Truth, Not to yeeld to any error or corruption ; let us desire that he would rule in our wils and affections, sway all, give all to him ; for that is his meaning when he sayes, *Open to me*, so that I may rule, as

S E R . V .

2 Cor. 10.

in mine owne house , as the husband rules in his family, and a King in his Kingdome, he will have all yeelded up to him : And he comes to beat downe all whatsoever is exalted against him, and that is the reason men are so loath to open unto him. They know if they open to the Spirit of God, he will turne them out of their fooles Paradice, and make them resolve upon other courses of life, which because they will not turne unto, they repell the sweet motions of the Spirit of Christ, and pull away his Graces, building bulwarkes against Christ, as lusts, strange imaginacions and resolutions. Let the Ministers say what they will, and the Spirit moove as he will, thus they live, and thus they will live. Let us take notice therefore of all the meanes that God useth to the state, and to us in particular, and every one labour to amend one. Every soule is the Temple, the House Christ should dwell in, let every soule therefore among us consider what meanes Christ useth to come into his soule to dwell with him, and to rule there.

And what shall we lose by it ? Doe we entertaine Christ to our losse ? Doth he come empty ? No, he comes with all Grace, his Goodnesse is a Communicative, diffusive goodnesse ; He comes to spread his Treasures, to enrich the heart with all Grace and strength to beare all afflictions, to encounter all dangers, to bring peace of Conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost ; he comes (indeed) to make our hearts (as it were) a Heaven. Doe but consider this, he comes not for his owne ends ; but to empty his

*Considerations
in/orcing us to
entertaine
Christ.*

his goodnesse into our hearts, as a breast that desires to empty it selfe when it is full. So this fountaine hath the fulnesse of a fountaine, which strives to empty his goodnesse into our soules; he comes out of love to us. Let these considerations melt our hearts for our unkindnesse, that we suffer him to stand so long at the doore knocking, as it is said here.

If we find not our suits answered so soon as we would, Remember we have made him also wait for us, perhaps to humble us, and after that to encourage us, he will make us wait, for we have made him wait. Let us not give over, for certainly he that desires us to open, that he may powre out his graces upon us, he will not reject us when we come to him: If he answers us not at first, yet he will at last. Let us goe on and wait, seeing there is no one duty pressed more in Scripture then this. And we see it is equity, *He waits for us*, it is good reason we should wait for him, if we have not comfort presently when we desire it, let us attend upon Christ, as he hath attended upon us, for when he comes, he comes with advantage; so that when we wait, we lose nothing thereby, but are gainers by it, increasing our patience. The longer we wait, he comes with the more abundant Grace and comfort in the end, and shewes himselfe rich and bountifull to them that wait upon him.

Mat. 7. 7.
Habak. 2. 3.

Ila. 30. 18.

Ila. 60. 16.

Ila. 64. 3.
Iam. 1. 4.

Ila. 4. 9.



The sixth Sermon.

CANT. V. II.

*It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying,
open unto me, my love, my dove, my undefiled, &c.*

N the first part of this verse hath been handled the Churches owne condition which she was in, after some blessed feelings that she had of the love of Christ.

Now in the next words, the Church sets down an acknowledgement of the carriage of Christ to her in this her sleepy condition. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocks, saying, Open to me my sister, my love, my dove, &c.* She acknowledgeth Christs voice in her sleepy estate, and sets down his carriage thus, *how he knocks*, and then also speaks, *Open to me*; and then sets downe what he suffered for her, *My head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night*. And that nothing might be wanting that might moove her heart to respect this his carriage towards her, he useth sweet titles, a loving compellation, *Open to me (faith he) my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled,*

as

as so many cords of love to draw her : so here wants neither loving carriage , sweet words, nor patience ; *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.*

The Church as she takes notice of the voice of Christ, so she doth also of the meanes he useth, and seeth his love in them all. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh*, saying, *Open to me, &c.* Here is also another distinguishing note of a sound Christian from an unsound : A sanctified Spirit sees Christ in the meanes, this is, sayes the heart, the word of Christ, and this the mercy of Christ, to take such paines with my soul, to send his Ministers, to provide his Ordinances, to give gifts to men, and men to the Church. *It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh.*

But we must especially understand it of the Ministeriall voice, whereby Christ doth chiefly make way for himselfe into the heart, and that by all kind of wayes dispensed therein ; as gifts of all sorts, some rougher, some milder, all kinde of Methods and wayes in the Ministery to make way for himselfe : First of all, by the threatenings of the Law, and by terrors, as *John* was sent before Christ, and as the storme went before the still and calme voice, wherein God came to *Elias*; so he useth all kind of courses in the Ministery, and Ministers by the direction of the Spirit turnethemselves, as it were, into all shipes and fashions, both of speech and Spirit to win people to God, insomuch that God appeales to them, *What could I have done more for my church, that I have not done?*

Eph. 4.12.

That Christ's knocking is especially by the Ministry of the Word.

1 Kin. 19.12.

There-
Isa 5.1.

SER. VI.

Use.

1 Sam. 3.5.

Therefore let us take notice of this voyce of Christ in the word, and not thinke as good Samuel thought, that *Eli* spake, when God spake; let us thinke that God speakes to us in the Ministry, that Christ comes to woe us, and win us thereby.

And we Ministers are the friends of the Bridegroomme, who are to heare what Christ saith, and would have said to the Church, and we must pray to him, that he would teach us what to teach others. We are to procure the contract, and to perfect it till the marriage be in heaven, that is our worke.

And you that are hearers, if you doe not regard Christs sweet voyce in the Ministry, which God hath appointed for the government of the world, know, that there is a voice that you cannot shake off, that peremptory voyce at the day of judgement, when he will say, *Goe ye cursed into hell fire, &c.* And that God who delights to be stiled a *God bearing prayer*, will not heare thee, but faith, *Such a one as turnes his eare away from hearing the Law, his prayer is abominable.* It is a dolefull thing, that he that made us, and allureth us in the Ministry, that followes us with all evidences of his love, and addes together with the Ministry many sweet motions of his Spirit, that he should delight in the destruction of his creatures, and not endure the sight of them, *Depart away from me ye cursed into hell fire, &c.* There are scarce any in the Church, but Christ hath allured at onetime or other to come in, and in many he opens

Mat. 25.

Prov. 28.9.

opens their understandings in a great measure, and knocks upon their hearts, that they (as it were) halfe open unto Christ, like Agrippa that said to Paul, *Thou almost persuadest me to be a Christian.* So Herod did many things, and he heard gladly. They are halfe open, seeme to open, but are not effectually converted, but at last they see, that further yeelding will not stand with that which they resolve not to part with ; their lusts, their present condition that they make their God, and their heaven, whereupon they shut the doore againe, when they have opened it a little to the motions of Gods Spirit, they dare give no further way, because they cannot learn the first lesson in Christs schoole, to deny themselves, and take up their crosse.

This is an undoubted conclusion, our blessed Saviour giveth such meanes and motions of his Spirit to the vilest persons in the Church, that their owne hearts tell them, they have more meanes and sweeter motions then they yeeld to, and that the sentence of condemnation is not pronounced upon them for meerly not knowing of Christ, but upon some grounds of rebellion, in that they goe not so farre as they are provoked, and put on by the Spirit of God, they resist the holy Spirit. There can be no resistance where there is not a going beyond the desire and will of him whom he resisteth. A man doth not resist, when he gives way as far as he is mooved. There is no wicked man in the Church, that gives so much way as he is mooved and stirred to by the Spirit and word of God.

Open to me my Sister, &c.

Away then with these impudent, ungracious Objections about Gods Decree for matter of Election, let us make it sure, and for any ill conceits that may rise in our hearts about that other of reprobation, let this damp them all, that in the Church of God, he offers unto the vilest wretch so much meanes with the motions of his Spirit, as he resisting, proves inexcusable, his owne rebellion therefore being the cause of his rejection. Let men cease from cavilling, God hath that in their own breast, in the heart of every carnall man which will speake for God against him, and stop his mouth that he shall be silent, and speechlesse at the day of judgement.

Thus we see that Christ doth condescend so low as to account it almost a part of his happiness to have our soules for a Temple to dwell in, to rule there. Therefore he makes all this earnest suit, with strong expressions what he suffereth.

And since Christ beares this great and large affection to his poore Church, it may encourage us to pray heartily for the same, and to spread before God the state thereof. *Why Lord? it is that part of the World that is thy sister, thy love, thy dove, thy undefiled. the Communion with whom thou livest above all the world besides.* It is a strong argument to prevale with God; therefore let us commend the state of the Church at this time, or at any time with this confidence, *Lord, it is the Church that thou lovest.* They thought they prevailed much with Christ, when they laboured to bring him

him to Lazarus, saying, Lord, He whom thou lovest is sicke. So say we, The Church whom thou lovest, that is thy onely love, In whom thy love is concentrate (as it were) and gathered to a head (as though thou hadst no other love in the world but thy Church) this thy love is in this state and condition. It is good to thinke of prevailing arguments, not to move God so much as our owne hearts, to strengthen our faith to prevaile with God, which is much fortified with the consideration of Christs wondrous loving expression to his poore Church. Then come to Christ, offer thy selfe, and he will meet thee. Are not two loving well-wishers well met. When thou offereſt thy ſelfe to him, and he ſeeks thy love, will he reject thee when thou commest to him that ſeeks thy love, and ſeekeſt it in this paſſionate, affectionate manner, as he doth? Therefore, be of good comfort, he is more willing to entertaine us then we are to come to him.

And for thoſe that have relapsed any kinde of way, let them not be diſcouraged to returne again to Christ; the Church here was in a drowſie ſleepy eſtate, and uſed him unkindly, yet he is ſo patient, that he waits her leisuſe as it were, and ſaith, Open to me my Sister, my Love, &c. Thomas was ſo uントoward, that he would not beleieve, Unleſſe he did ſee the print of the nailes, &c. in Chrifts body. Yet Christ was ſo gracious, as he condescendeth to poore Thomas, ſo to Peter after he was fallen, and to the Church after backſliding.

SER. VI.
Ioh. 11.3.
Simile.

That the Re-lapsed need not
desperately to
be discouraged.

SER. VI.
Observe.

Open to me my Sister, &c.

Hence observe further,

That Christ hath never enough of his Church till he hath it in Heaven, where are indeed the kisses of the Spouse, and of Christ: In the meane while Open, Open still. Christ had the heart of the Spouse in some measure already, but yet there were some corners of the heart that were not so filled with Christ as they should be, he was not so much in her understanding, will, joy, delight, and love, as he would be; therefore, Open thy understanding more and more to embrace me, and divine truths that are offered thee; Open thy love, to solace me more and more: For God in Christ having condescended to the tearmes of friendship, nay to intimate tearmes of friendship in marriage with us. Therefore as the Church in her right temper, hath never enough of Christ, but desires further union, and communion still. It being the description of the people of God, that they love the appearance of Christ, as they loved his first appearance, and waited for the consolation of Israel: so they love his second appearing, and are never quiet, till he comes againe in the flesh, to consummate the marriage begun here: so Christ also he is as desirous of them, yea they are his desires that breed their desires, Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, &c. Againe his Love and pitty moves him to desire further to come into us: Christ knows what is in our hearts, if he be not there, there is that that should not be there. What is in the braine where Christ is not? a deale

2 Tim. 4. 18.
Rev. 22. 20.

a deale of worldly projects nothing worth. What is in our joy, if Christ be not there? worldly joy, which cleaves to things worse then it selfe. If a man were anatomized, and seen into, he would be ashamed of himselfe, if he did see himselfe; Christ therefore out of pitty to our soules, would not have the Devill there; Christ knowes it is good for our soules to give way to him, therefore he useth all sweet allurements, *Open to me my Sister, my Love, &c.* Christ hath never his fill, till he close with the soule perfectly, so that nothing be in the soule above him, nothing equall to him, therefore *Open, Open still.*

Againe, He sets downe to move the Church the more to open to him the inconveniences that he endured, *My head is filled with dew, &c.* wherein he shewes what he suffered, which sufferings are of two sorts: *In himselfe: In his Ministers.* In himselfe, and in hisowne blessed person what did he endure? what patience had he in enduring the refractory spirits of men when he was here? how many indignities did he digest in his Disciples after their conversion? Towards his latter end, his head was not onely filled with the drops, but his body filled with drops of bloud. Drops of bloud came from him, because of the anguish of his Spirit, and the sense of Gods wrath for our sinnes. Upon the Crosse, what did he endure there? that sense of Gods anger there was onely for our finnes. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* What should we speake of his going up and downe doing good, preaching in

SER.VI.

Ioh.3.19.

in his owne person, setting whole nights apart for prayer ; And then for what he suffers in his Ministers ? there he knocks, and saith, *open in them*. And how was he used in the Apostles that were after him , and in the Ministers of the Church ever since ? What have they endured ? for he put a spirit of patience upon them. And what indignities endured they in the Primitive Church, that were the publishers of the Gospel, those sweet publishers thereof, drawing men to open to Christ, were killed for preaching. So cruell is the heart, that it offereth violence to them that love them most, that love their soules. And what greater love , then the love of the soule ? yet this is the Satanicall temper and disposition of mens hearts , they hate those men most, that deale this way most truly and lovingly with them. It is not that the Gospell is such an hard message. It is the word of Reconciliation, and the word of life ; but the heart hates it, because it would draw men from their present condition; and therefore, *condemnation is come into the world, in that men hate the light, because their works are evill.* Is there any thing truly and cordially hated but Grace ? and are any persons heartily and cordially hated in the world so much as the Promulgers and Publishers of Grace, and the Professors of it, because it upbraids most of all , and meddles with the corruptions of men, that are dearer to them then their owne soules.

Now what patience is there in Christ to suffer

fer himselfe in his messengers, and his childien to be thus used ? Nor is it strange to say that Christ stands thus in his Ministers, for 1 Pet. 3. 19. it is said, *That Christ by his Spirit preached in the dayes of Noah to the soules now in prison,* Christ preached in Noahs time before he was Incarnate, much more doth he preach now ; and as he was patient then to endure the old World, unto whom Noah preached a hundred and twenty yeares : so he is patient now in his Ministers, to preach still by the same Spirit, even to us still, and yet the entertainment in many places is (as Paul complaines) *though the more I love you, yet the less I am beloved of you.*

2 Cor. 12. 13.

Let these things move us to be patient towards God and Christ, if we be corrected in any kind, considering that Christ is so patient towards us, and to wait upon him with patience. How long hath he waited for our conversion ? how long doth he still wait for the through giving up of our soules to him ? Shall we thinke much then to wait a little while for him ?

Use 1.

And let this Spirit of Christ strengthen us likewise in our dealing with others, as to beare with evill men ; and as it is, 2 Tim. 2. 25, 26. To wait if God will at any time give them repentance. Neither may we be so short spirited, that if we have not an answer presently to give over. We should imitate Christ here, never give over as long as God continues life with any advantage & opportunity to do good to any soul, wait, if God at any time will give them grace. *Open to me, my Sister, my Love, &c.*

M

Let

Use 2.

SBR. VI.

Let this againe worke upon us, that our Saviour Christ here would thus set forth his love, and his patience in his love, in bearing wiche us thus under the resemblance of a silly suster that comes afar off, and stands at the doore, and knocks, that Christ should stoop thus in seeking the good of our soules. Let this win, and quicken our hearts with all readinesse and thankfulnesse to receive him *when he comes to worke in our soules*, considering that Christ hath such a care of us by himselfe, his Ministers, and the motions of his Spirit, who joynes with his Minestery ; let us not therefore be carelesse of our owne soules, but let it move our hearts to melt to him. The motives may bee seene more in the particular compellations, *Open to me my Sister, my Love, &c.*

My Sister.

This was spoken of before in the former verse. The Church of God is Christs Sister and Spouse, we are knit to him both by *Consanguinity*, and by *Affinity*. The nearest affinity is *Marriage*, and the nearest consanguinity is *Sister*. So that there are all Bonds to knit us to Christ ; Whatsoever is strong in any Bond, he knits us to him by it. Is there any love in an *Husband*, a *Brother*, a *Mother*, a *Friend*, in an *Head* to the members in any thing in the world ? Is there any *love* scattered in any relation ? gather it all into one, and all that love, and a thousand times more then that, is in Christ in a more eminent manner ; therfore he stiles himselfe in all these sweet relations,

ons, to shew that he hath the love of all. Will a Sister shut out a Brother, when the Brother comes to visit her, and doe her all good? is this unkindness even in Nature to looke strangely upon a man that is neare a kin, that comes and saith, *Open to me my Sister?* If the Sister should shut out the Brother, were it not most unnatural? And is it not monstrous in Grace? when our Brother comes for our good, and in pitty to our soules to let him stand without doores? Remember that Christ hath the same affections, to account us *Brothers* and *Sisters* now in Heaven, as he had when he was upon the Earth: For after his Resurrection (saith he to his Disciples) *I goe to my God, and to your God, to my Father, and to your Father;* he calls himselfe our Brother, having one common Father in Heaven, and one Spirit, and one inheritance, &c. This is a sweet relation, Christ being our Brother, his heart cannot but melt towards us in any affliction. *Ioseph* dissembled a while out of politicke wisedome, but because he had a Brothers heart to *Benjamin*, therefore at last he could not hold, but melted into teares, though he made his countenance, as though he had not regarded. So our *Ioseph* now in Heaven, may seem to withdraw all tokens and signes of Brotherly love from us, and not to owne us; but it is only in shew, he is our Brother still, his heart first or last will melt towards his Brethren to their wonderfull comfort, *My Sister, &c.*

Ioh. 20. 17.

Gen. 42.

My Love.

My Love.

That word we had not yet. It is worthy also a little standing on ; for all these four words be (as it were) the attractive cords to draw the Spouse, not onely by shewing what he had suffered, but by sweet titles, *My Love, my Dove.*

What had Christ no love but his Spouse? did his love goe out of his owne heart to her (as it were?) It is strange, yet true; Christs love is so great to his Church and Children, and so continuall to it, that his Church and People, and every Christian soule is the seat of his love, *That love in his owne breast being in them, they are his love,* because he himselfe is there, and one with them.

He loves all his Creatures, they have all some beames of his goodnessse, *Which he must needs love;* therefore he loves them as Creatures ; and as they be more or lesse capable of a higher degree of goodnessse; but for his Church and Children, they are his love indeed.

But what is the ground of such love ?

1. *He loves them as he beholds them in his Fathers choise,* as they are Elected of God, and given unto himselfe in Election; *Thine they are, thou gavest them me.* Christ looking on us in Gods Election and choice, loves us.

2. Againe, *He loves us, because he sees his owne Graces in us,* he loves what is his in us. Before we be actually his, he loves us with a *love of good will,* to wish all good to us ; but when we have anything of his Spirit, that our natures are altered

Ioh. 17. ult.

1.

Ioh. 17. 6.

2.

SER. VI.

1 Cor. 11.7.

red and charged; he loves us with a love of the intimatest friendship ; with the love of an Head, Husband, Friend, and what we can imagine ; he loves his owne Image. *Paul saith, That the Wife is the glory of her Husband* ; because whatsoeuer is in a good Husband, the Wife expresseth it by reflection: *So the Church is the glory of Christ*, she reflects his excellencies, though in a weake measure, they shew forth his Vertues or prayses, as Peter speaks, thus he sees his owne Image in her, and the Holy Ghost in his Church, he loves her, and these in her: so as whether we regard the Father, or himselfe, or his Spirit, the Church is his Love.

If we consider also what he hath done and suffered for her, we may well say the Church is his Love. Besides the former favours (not to speake of Election) he choosed us before we were, In time he did chuse us by actuall Election, by which he called us: we had an existence, but we resisted, he called us when we resisted ; and then also he justified us, and cloathed us with his owne Righteousnesse, and after feeds us with his own body. As the soule is the most excellent thing in the world, so he hath provided for it the most excellent ornaments. It hath food and ornaments proportionable. What love is this, that he should feed our soules with his owne body, and cloathe us with his owne Righteousnesse. *He loved me* (*faith Paul*) what was the effect of his love ? *He gave himselfe for me*. He gave himselfe both that we might have a Righteousnesse to cloathe us

3.

Gal. 2.20.

SER. VI.

Ioh. 6.55.

Eph. 4.16.

Deductions out
of the word
Love.

1.

with in the sight of God, and he gave himselfe, that he might be the bread of life, *My flesh is meat indeed, and my bloud is drinke indeed.* The guilty, the selfe-accusing soul feeds upon Christ dying for its sinnes. Againe, *Rev. 1.6.* you have his love set forth, *He loved us,* and how doth he witnesse it? *He hath washed us with his owne bloud, and hath made us Kings and Priests, &c.* the like you have, *Ephes. 5.* *He loved us, and gave himselfe a sweet Sacrifice to God for us.* When this world is at an end, we shall see what his love is; he is not satisfied, till we be all in one place. What doth he pray for to his Father, *Ioh. 17.24.* *Father I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, &c.* run through all the whole course of Salvation, Election, Vocation, Iustification, Glorification, you shall see his love in all of them. But it were an infinite argument to follow, to shew the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, and it is too large for us to know all the dimensions of it, to see the height, breadth, depth, and length of it, which we should ever thinke, speake, and meditate of, because the soule is then in the most fit temper to serve, love, and glorifie God, when it is most apprehensive of his great love.

This phrase imports diverse things, *That there is no saving love to any out of the Church,* which is his love. It is (as it were) confined in the Church, as if all the beames of his love met in that center, as we see when the beames of the Sunne meet in a glasse, they burne, because many are there

there united. So in the Church all his love doth meet.

Then the Church is his love also, because whatsoever she hath or hopes for, is from his love, and is nothing but his love. The Church as it is a Church, is nothing but the love of Christ. That there is a Church so endowed, so graced, so full of the hope of glory, it is out of his love.

And for the properties of it, It is a *free love*, a *preventing love*; he loved us before ever we could love him; he loved us when we resisted him, and were his enemies.

It is a most tender love, as you have it, Isa. 49.15.
Can a mother forget her sucking childe, if she should yet will not I forget thee ? thou art written on the palmes of my hands, &c. He hath us in his heart, in his eye, in his hand, in a mothers heart, and beyond it ; he hath a tender eye and a powerfull hand to maintaine his Church.

It is a *most transcendent, and carefull love*, all comparisons are under it.

And it is a *most intimate invincible love*, that nothing could quench it, as we see here the Church droupeth, and had many infirmities, yet she is Christs love, so that the love of Christ is a kind of love that is unconquerable, no water will ever quench it, no sin of ours, no infirmity : So as it is very comfortable that the Church considered under infirmities, is yet the love of Christ, *I sleep, but my heart waketh, yet Christ comes with my Love, my Dove, &c.*

Properties of it.

2.

Deut.33.2.

3.

4.

SER. VI.

Quest.

Answ.

But what cannot Christ see matter of weaknesse, sinfulness, hatred, and dislike in the Church?

Oh yes, to pity, help, and heale it, but not at all to diminish his love, but to manifest it so much the more. His love is a tender love, sensible of all things wherewith we displease him, yet it is so invincible and unconquerable, that it overcomes all. Againe, he sees ill indeed in us, but he sees in us some good of his owne also, which moves him more to love, then that that is ill in us moves him to hate; for what he sees of ours, he sees with a purpose to vanquish, mortifie, and eat it out; the Spirit is as fire to consume it; He is as water to wash it, but what he sees of his owne, he sees with a purpose to increase it more and more, and to perfect it, therefore he fayes my Love, notwithstanding that the church was asleep.

Vse.

This therefore serves greatly for our comfort, to search what good Christ by his Spirit hath wrought in our hearts, what faith, what love, what sanctified judgement, what fire of holy affections to him, and to the best things? O let us value our selves by that that is good, that Christ hath in us. We are Christs love notwithstanding we are sleepy, if we be displeased with this our state, that as Christ dislikes it, so if we by the Spirit dislike it, the matter is not what sin we have in us, but how we are affected to it. Have we that ill in us, which is truly the grieve of our hearts and soules, which as Christ dislikes, so we

we abhorre it, and would be purged, and rid of it; and it is the grieve of our hearts and soules, that we cannot be better, and more lovely in Christ's eye; then let us not be discouraged: For Christ esteemes of his Church highly, even as his *very love*, even at that time when she was sleepy. And may teach us in time of temptation not to hear kento Satan, who then moves us to looke altogetherupon that which is naught in us, thereby to abate our love to Christ, and our apprehension of his to us; for he knowes if we be sensible of the love of Christ to us, we shall love him againe. For love is a kind of fire, an active quality, which will set us about glorifying God, and pulling downe Satans kingdome: As we say in nature (*fire doth all*) what worke almost can a man worke without fire, by which all instruments are made and heated, &c. So grace doth all with *love*; God first doth manifest to our soules his love to us in Christ, and quicken us by his Spirit, witnessing his love to us wherewith hee warmes our hearts, kindles and inflames them so with love, that we love him againe, which love hath a constraining sweet violence to put us upon all duties, to suffer, to doe, to resist any thing. If a man be in love with Christ, what will be harsh to him in the world? the Devill knowes this well enough, therefore one of his maine engines and temptations is to weaken our hearts in the sence of Gods love and of Christ's; therefore let us be as wise for our soules as he is subtle and politicke against them; as watchfull for our own comfort,

SER. VI.

Quest.Answ.

Heb. 12.

2.

comfort, as he is to discomfort us, and make us despair. Let us be wise to gather all the arguments of Christ's love that we can.

But how shall we know that Christ loves us in this peculiar manner?

First, Search what course he takes and hath taken to draw thee nearer unto him ; *he chastiseth every one that he loveth.* Seasonable corrections sanctified are a sign of Christ's love, when he will not suffer us to thrive in sinne, when we cannot speake nor doe amisse; but either he lasheth us in our conscience for it, and by his Spirit checks us, or else stirs up others, one thing or other to make us out of love with sin.

Againe, we may gather Christ's love by this, if we have any love to divine things, and can set a great price upon the best things, upon the word, because it is Christ's word; upon grace, prizing the image of Christ, and the new creature, when we can set an high value upon communion with Christ, the sense of his love in our hearts, and all spirituall prerogatives, and excellencies above all things, this is an excellent argument of Christ's love to us ; Our love is but a reflection of his, and therefore if we have love to any thing that is good, we have it from him first. If a wall that is cold become hot, we say, *the Sunne*, of necessity must shine on it first, because it is nothing but cold stone of it selfe. So if our hearts, that are naturally cold be heated with the love of divine things, certainly we may say, Christ hath shined here first ; for naturally our hearts

hearts are of a cold temper, there is no such thing as spirituall love growing in our natures and hearts.

You have many poore soules helped with this, who cannot tel whether Christ loves them or no; but this helps them a little, they can finde undoubted arguments of their love to Christ, his Image and servants, and of relishing the word, though they find much corruption; and this their love to divine things, tel them by demonstrations from the effects, that *Christ loves them*, because there is no love to divine and supernaturall things without the love of Christ first. And the graces in our hearts, they are love tokens given to the Spouse. Common favours he gives, as *Abraham* gifts to his servants and others, but speciall gifts to his Spouse: If therefore there be any grace, a tender and soft heart, a prizing of heavenly things, love to Gods people and truth, then we may comfortably conclude Christ loves us, not only becausethey are reflections of Gods love, but because that they are jewels and ornaments that Christ onely bestowes upon his Spouse, and not upon reprobates, such precious jewels as these.

By discovering his secrets to us, for that is an argument of love. Doth Christ by his Spirit discover the secret love he hath borne to us before all worlds? doth he discover the breast of his Father, and his own heart to us? this discovery of secret affections, of entire love sheweth our happy state; for that is one prerogative of friendship,

3.
Ioh. 15. 15.
Psal. 25.

SER. VI.

ship, and the chiefeſt diſcovery of ſecreſts, when he giues us a particular riſht to trutheſ, as our owne, that we can goe challenge them; theſe are mine, theſe belong to me, theſe promiſes are mine, this diſcovery of the ſecret love of God, and of the intereſt we haue in the promiſes, is a ſigne that Christ loves us, and that in a peculiare manner we are his love.

Uſe 1.

1.

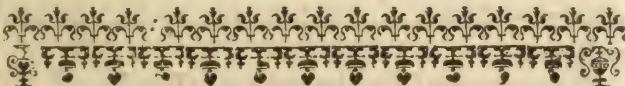
Reprooſe.

Let us be like our bleſſed Saviour, that where we ſee any ſaving goodneſſe in any, let us love them; for ſhould not our love meet with our Sa- viours love. Shall the Churche of God be the love of Christ, and ſhall it be our hatred? Shall a good Christian be Chrifths love, and ſhall he be the obiect of my hatred and ſcorne? can we imi- tate a better patteſne? O let us never thiſke our eſtate to be good, except every childe of God be our love, as he is Chrifths love! Can I love Christ, and cannot I love him in whom I ſee Christ? It is a ſigne that I hate himſelfe, when I hate his Image. It is to be wondred at, that the Devil hath prevailed with any ſo much, as to thiſke they ſhould be in a good eſtate, when they haue hearts riſing againſt the beſt people, and who as they grow in grace, ſo they grow in their diſlike of them. Is here the Spirit of Christ? And let them likewiſe be here reproved, that are glad to ſee any Christian halft, ſlip, and goe awry. The beſt Christians in the world haue that in part, which is wholly in another man; he hath fleſh in him. Shall we utterly diſtaſte a Christian for that? The Churche was now in a ſleepy con- diſion,

2.

Reprooſe.

dition, and yet notwithstanding Christ takes not the advantage of the weaknesse of the Church to easheere, and to hate her ; but he pittles her the more, and takes a course to bring her againe into a good state and condition. Let us not therefore be glad at the infirmities and failings of any, that discover any true goodnesse in them ; it may be our owne case ere long, it casts them not out of Christs love, but they dwell in his love still ; why should we then cast them out of our love and affections ? Let them be our *love* still, as they are the *love* of Christ, notwithstanding their infirmities.



The seventh Sermon.

CANT. V. II, III.

*My Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled ; for my head is
filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of
the night.*

*I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on ? I have
washed my feet, how shall I defile them ?*

Great the life of a Christian is a perpetually conflicting, appeares evidently in this Booke, the passages whereof joined with our owne experiences, sufficiently declare

SER. VII.

clare what combats, tryals, and temptations the Saints are subject unto after their new birth and change of life, now up, now downe, now full of good resolutions, now againe sluggish and slow, not to be waked, nor brought forwards by the voice of Christ, as it was with the Church here, she will not out of her sleep to open unto Christ, though he call and knocke, and stand waiting for entrance. She is now desirous to pity her selfe, and needs no Peter to stir her up unto it, the flesh of it selfe is prone enough to draw backe, and make excuses to hinder the power of grace from its due operation in us. She is laid along (as it were) to rest her; yet is not she so asleep, but she discernes the voice of Christ, but up and rise she will not.

Ioh. 3.6.

Thus we may see the truth of that speech of our Saviour verified, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is borne of the Spirit is Spirit.* The flesh puls her backe, the Spirit would raise her up to open to Christ, he in the meane while makes her inexcusable, and prepares her by his knocking, waiting, and departing, as for a state of further *Humiliation*, so for an estate of further *Exaltation*. But how lovingly doth he speake to her?

Why my Love.

I.

Open unto me my Love.

He calls her *my Love*, especially for two respects; partly because *his love was settled upon her*, it was in his owne breast, but it rested not there, but seated it selfe upon, and in the heart of his Spouse, so that she became Christs love. Wee know

know the heart of a lover is more where it loves, then were it lives(as we use to speak)and indeed, there is a kind of a going out (as it were) to the thing beloved, with a heedlesnesse of all other things, where the affection is in any excesse, it carries the whole soule with it.

But besides this, when Christ saith *my love*, he shewes, that as his love goes and plants, and seats it selfe in the Church, so it is united to that, and is not scattered to other objects. There are beames of Gods generall love scattered in the whole world; but this love, this exceeding love is onely fastened upon the Church. And indeed there is no love comparable to this love of Christ, which is above the love of Women, of Father, or Mother, if we consider what course he takes to shew it: For there could be nothing in the world so great to discover his love, as this gift, and gift of himselfe; And therefore he gave himselfe (the best thing in Heaven or in Earth) withall to shew his love, *The Father gave him*. When he was God equall with his Father, he loved his Church, and gave himselfe for it; how could he discover his love better then to take our Nature to shew how he loved us: how could he come nearer to us, then by being incarnate, so to be bone of our bone, & flesh of our flesh, & took our nature to shew how he loved it? *Love drawes things nearer where soever it is*; It drew him out of Heaven to the Wombe of the Virgin, there to be incarnate, and after that, when he was borne not onely to be a man, but a miserable man, because we

Eph. 5 30.

SER. VII.

we could not be his Spouse unlesse he purchased us by his death. We must be his Spouse by a satisfaction made to Divine Justice. God would not give us to him, but with salving his *Inſtice*. What sweet love is it to heale us not by fearing, or lan-
cing, but by making a plaister of his own bloud,
which he ſhed for thoſe that ſhed his in malice
and hatred. What a wondrous love is it, that he
ſhould powre forth teares for thoſe that ſhed his
bloud, *O Ierusalem, Ierusalem, &c.* that he pray-
ed for thoſe that persecuted him ? and what
wondrous love is it now that he ſympathizeth
with us in Heaven, accounting the harme that is
done to the leaſt member he hath, as done to
himſelſe? *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ?* and
that he ſhould take us into one Body with him-
ſelſe, to make one Christ ? and he doth not con-
tent himſelſe with any thing he can doe for us
here ; but his deſire is that we may be one with
him more and more, and be for ever with him
in the Heavens, as you have it in that excellent
prayer, *John 17.24.*

Act 9.4.

1 Cor. 12.

Now this ſhould stir us up to be fully perſwa-
ded of his love, that loves us ſo much. Christs
love in us, is as the loadſtone to the yron, our
hearts are heavy and downwards of themſelves.
We may eſpecially know his love by this, that
it drawes us upwards, and makes us heavenly
minded, it makes us deſire further and further
communion with him, ſtill there is a magneti-
call attractive force in Christs love, whereſoever
it is, it drawes the heart and affections after it.

And

SER. VII.
Use 2.

And we may know from hence one Argument to prove the stability of the Saints, and the immortality of the soule, because Christ calls the Church his *Love*. The want of love again (where it is entire, and in any great measure) is a misery. Christ therefore should suffer, if those he hath planted his love upon, whom he loves truly, either should fall away for ever, or should not be immortall for ever. Christ will not lose his love; and as it is an argument of persevering in grace, so is it of an everlasting being that this soule of ours hath, because it is capable of the love of Christ, seeing there is a sweet union, and communion between Christ and the soule. It should make Christ miserable (as it were) in Heaven, the place of happiness, if there should not be a meeting of him and his Spouse, there must therefore be a meeting, which marriage is for ever, that both may be for ever happy one in another.

Hol. 2.

Use 3.

Let us often warme our hearts with the consideration hereof, because all our love is from this love of his. Oh the wonderfull love of God, that both such transcendent Majesty, and such an infinite love should dwell together (We say) *Majesty* and *Love* never dwell together, because, *Love is an abasing of the soule to all services*. But herein it is false; for here *Majesty* and *Love* dwell together in the heart of one Christ, which Majesty hath stooped as low, as his Almighty power could give leave. Nay, it was an Almighty power that he could stoop so low, and yet be God keeping his Majesty still. For God to become

N

man,

SER. VII.

man, to hide his Majesty for a while, not to be knowne to be God, and to hide so farre in this nature, as to die for us. What an Almighty power was this, that could goe so low, and yet preserve himselfe God still? yet this we see in this our blessed Saviour, the greatest Majesty met with the greatest abasement that ever was, and all out of love to our poore soules. There was no stooping, no abasement that was ever so low as Christ was abased unto us, to want for a time even the comfort of the presence of his Father. There was an union of Grace, but the union of solace and comfort that he had from him, was suspended for a time, out of love to us, for he had a right in his owne person to be in Heaven presently. Now for him to live so long out of Heaven, and oft times, especially towards his suffering to be without that solace (that he might be a sacrifice for our sinnes) to have it suspended for a time, what a condescending was this? It is said, *Psal. 113.6. that God stoops to behold the things done here below.* It is indeed a wondrous condescending that God will looke upon things below; but that he would become man, and out of love to save us, suffer as he did here, this is wondrous humility to astonishment. We thinke humility is not a proper grace becomming the Majesty of God: So it is not indeed; but there is some resemblance of that grace in God, especially in Christ, that he should to reveale himselfe, vaile himselfe with flesh, and all out of love to us. The consideration of these things is wondrous effectuall,

& tuall, as to strengthen *Faith*, so to kindle *Love*,
Let these be for a taste to direct our meditations
herein. It followes.

SER. VII.

My Dove.

We know when Christ was baptized, the Holy-Ghost appeared in the shape of a Dove(as a symbole of his presence) to discover thus much, That Christ should have the property and disposition of a *Dove, and be meeke and gentle*. For indeed he became man for that end to be a *mercifull Saviour*. *Learne of me, for I am meeke and lowly*. *And I will not quench the smoaking flaxe, nor breake the bruised reed, &c.* said he ; and therefore the Spirit appeared upon him in the shape of a Dove : As likewise, To shew what his office should be ; for even as the Dove in Noahs Arke was sent out, and came home againe to the Arke with an *Olive Branch*, to shew that the waters were abated : So Christ was to preach deliverance from the deluge of Gods anger, and to come with an Olive leafe of peace in his mouth, and reconciliation, to shew that Gods wrath was appeased. When he was borne, the Angels sung, *Glory to God on high, on earth peace, and good will towards men*: Now as Christ had the Spirit in the likenesse of a *Dove* : So all that are Christs, the Spouse of Christ, have the disposition of Christ, *that Spirit that framed him to be like a Dove*, frames the Church to be a *Dove, as the oyntment that was powred on Aarons head, it ran downe upon the lowest skirts of his garments*.

Now the Church is compared to a *Dove* ;
N 2 partly,

Mat. 3.

1.

Mat. 11. 29.

Mat. 12. 20.

2.

Luk. 2. 14. ☩

Psal. 133. 3.

SER. VII.

That every
Creature bath
in it some beam
of the Majestie
of God.

Properties of
the Dove.

I.
Meeknesse.

Psal. 39.2.

partly, for the disposition that is and should be in the Church resembling that creature. And partly also, For that the Church is in a mournfull suffering condition, 1. For the like disposition as is found in a Dove. There is some good in all creatures; there is no creature but it hath a beame of Gods Majestie, of some Attribute, but some more then others. There is an Image of vertue even in the inferiour creatures. Wherefore the Scripture sends us to them for many vertues ; as the slug-gard to the Ant: And indeed we may see the true perfection of the first Creation, the state of it more in the creatures then in our selves, for there is no such degeneration in any creature as there is in man.

Now that which in a Dove the Scripture aimeth at, *We shoulde resemble a Dove in, is his meeke-nesse especially.* The Church is meeke both to God and Man, not given to murmurings and revenge-ment; meeke, that is, *I held my tongue without murmuring* (as it is in the Psalme) *I was dumbe,* &c. which is a grace that Gods Spirit frames in the heart of the Church, and every particular Christian, even to be meeke towards God by an holy silence; And likewise towards men to put on the Bowels of meeke-nesse, as we are exhorted, Colos.

3.12. *As the Elett of God put on the Bowels of meeke-nesse and compassion, &c.* Hereby we shall shew our selves to be Christs, and to have the Spirit of Christ. And this grace disposeth us to a nearer communion with God then other graces: It is a grace that God most delights in, and would

would have his Spouse to be adorned with, as is shewed, 1 Pet. 3.4. where the Apostle tels women, it is the best jewell and ornament that they can weare, and is with God of great price. Moses we read, was a mighty man in prayer; and a speciaall meanes to help and fit him thereunto, was because he was the meekest man on earth. And therefore, Zeph. 2.1,2. *Seeke the Lord, seeke meeknesse.* And it fits a man for communion with God. *For God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the meeke and humble.* It is a grace that empties the soule of selfe-conceit, to thinke a mans selfe unworthy of any thing, and so makes it *capacious, low, and fit for God to fill with a larger measure of his Spirit;* it takes away the roughnesse and swelling of the soule, that keeps out God and grace; therefore in that grace we must especially be like this meeke creature, which is no vindictive creature, that hath no way to revenge it selfe.

Againe, *It is a simple creature without guile,* it hath no way to defend it self, but only by flight. There is a simplicity that is sinfull, when there is no mixture of wisedome in it. There is a simplicity, that is a pure simplicity, and so God is simple, which simplicity of God is the ground of many other Attributes: For thereupon he is *Eternal,* because there is nothing contrary in him, there is no mixture in him of any thing opposite: so that is a good simplicity in us, when there is no mixture of fraud, no duplicity in the soule; *A double hearted man is inconstant and unstable in all*

all his wayes. Now simplicity as it is a vertue, so we must imitate the Dove in it, for there is a sinfull Dove-like silliness : For *Hosea 7.11. Ephraim is said there to be like a silly Dove without heart, they call to Egypt, they goe to Assyria.* There is a fatall simplicity usually going before destruction, when we hate those that defend us, and account them enemies, and relie more upon them that are enemies indeed then upon friends. So it was with *Ephraim* before his destruction, he was a silly Dove without heart, he called to Egypt and went to *Assyria* (false friends) that were enemies to the Church of God ; yet they trusted them more then God or the Prophets. Men have a world of tricks to undermine their friends, to ruine them, and to deserve ill of those that would with all their hearts deserve well of them, when yet in the meane time they can gratifie the enemy, please them, and hold correspondency with them, as here *Ephraim* did. *Ephraim is a silly Dove, &c.* This therefore is not that which we must aime at ; but to be simple and children concerning evill, but not in ignorance and simplicity that way.

^{3.}
Faithfulness.

Psal. 73.25.

Againe, this creature is a faithfull creature, that is mainly here aimed at, it is faithfull to the mate : So the Christian soule by the Spirit of God, it is made faithfull to Christ, it keeps the judgement chaste, is not tainted with errorrs and sinnes, he keeps his affection chaste likewise, sets nothing in his heart above Christ, whom hath he in Heaven but him, and what is there in Earth he desires besides

sides him. You know in the *Revelation*, the *Sponse of Christ* is brought in like a *Virgin contracted*, but the *Romish Church* like a *whore*. Therefore the *Church of God* must take heed of the *Romane Church*, for that is not a *Dove*, we must be *Virgins*, who must keep chaste soules to Christ, as you have it, *Rev. 14.4.* *Those that follow the Lamb, wheresoever he goeth, they have not defiled themselves with women*, the meaning is spirituall, namely that they have not defiled themselves with Idolatry and spirituall fornication ; they have chaste hearts to Christ: so in this respect they resemble the *Dove*. Then therefore that draw away from the love of Religion to mixture, to be *meretrices*, and harlots in Religion, they are not Christ's Doves, as farre as they yeeld to this, it is an argument that they have false hearts ; Christ's Church is a *Dove*, she keeps close and inviolate to him.

Rev. 14.4.

Againe, this creature is of a neate disposition, it will not lodge where it shall be troubled with stench, and annoyed that way, and likewise feeds neatly on pure graine, not upon carrion, as you see in the *Arke*, when the *Raven* was sent out, it lights upon carrion, of which there was then plenty, and therefore never came into the *Arke* againe : But the *Dove*, when she went out, would not light upon carrion, or dead things; and so finding no fit food came backe againe to the *Arke*. So the Christian soule in this respect is like a *Dove*, that will not feed upon worldly carrion, or sinfull pleasures, but upon Christ and spirituall things.

*4.
Neatnesse.**Gen. 8.7.**Simile.*

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things. The soule of a carnall, and a naturall man useth to feed upon dust, earth and earthly things, when the soule of a true Christian, that hath the taste of grace, feeds *neatly*, it will not feed on that which is base and earthly, but upon heavenly and spirituall things.

5.

Isa. 60. 8.

It is Gregaria avis, a bird that loves communion and fellowship, as the Prophet speaks, *Who are those that flocke to the windowes as Doves*; for so they use to flocke to their houses by companies. So the children of God love the communion and fellowship one of another, and keep severed from the world, as soone as ever they are separated from it; delighting in all those of the same nature. *Doves will consort with Doves*; Christians with Christians and none else, they can relish no other company, these and such like properties may profitably be considered of the *Dove*. The much standing upon these, were to wrong the intendment of the Spirit of God; to neglect them altogether, were as much. Therefore we have touched upon some properties only.

2.

Now, *For the sufferings of the Church*, it is like a *Dove* in this, *The Dove is molested by all the birds of prey*, it being the common prey of all other ravenous birds. So the poore Church of God is persecuted and molested, *Oh that I had wings like a Dove, &c.* (saith holy David) It is an old speech, and it is for ever true, *That Crows and such, escape better then Doves*. The punishment that should light on *Ravens*, oft times it lights

on

on Doves : Thus Gods Dove, Gods Church is used.

But, What defence hath Gods poore Church? why no defence: But

First, flight, even as the Dove hath nothing but flight, it hath no talents to wound, but it hath flight : so we are to fly to God as to our mountaine, fly to the Arkethat God may take us in. The Church of God hath no other refuge but to be housed in God and Christ, he is our Arke.

Prov. 18.10,

Secondly, and to mourne, as Hezekiah saith of himselfe, Isa. 38. He mourned as a Dove, and chattered like a Crane. The state of the Church of God is like the Turtles, to mourne in all afflictions, desertions, and molestations of wicked men, to mourne to God who heares the bemonings of his owne Spirit in them ; and woe to all other birds, the birds of prey, when the Turtles doe mourne (because of their cruelty) it is a presage of ruine to them, when they force the Turtle to sorrow and mourning.

And then thirdly, they have another refuge besides flight and mourning, which is to build high from vermine that would otherwise molest them. Instinct teacheth them thus to escape their enemies by building high, and so to secure themselves : So there is in Gods children a gracious instinct put, an Antipathy to the enemies of it, which tends to their safety, in that they mingle not themselves with them. And likewise, God breeds in them a familiarity with himselfe, and stirs

3.

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stirs them to build in him as on a rocke, to be safe in him.

Obiect.

Psal. 74. 19.

But you will object, If the Church of God be his Dove, why is it so with it as it is, that God should suffer his Love and his Dove, and his Turtle thus (as it were) to be preyed upon, *Give not the soule of thy Turtle to the beasts* (saith the Psalmist) If the Church were Gods Dove, he would esteeme more of it then he doth, and not suffer it to be persecuted thus?

God never forsakes his Dove, but is an Arke for it to fly too, a Rocke for it to build on. The Dove hath alwayes a refuge in God, and in Christ in the worst time. You have a notable place for this, *Psal. 68. 13.* *Though you have lien among the pots,* (that is) smeared and sullied; yet they shall be *as the wings of a Dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold,* when the Almighty scattered Kings in it, it was white as the snow in Salmon. So though the Church of God lies among the po's a while all smeared, and soiled, and sullied with the ill usage of the world; yet as long as it keeps it selfe a Dove, unspotted of the filth of the world and sinne, though it bee smeared with the ill usage thereof, we see what God promiseth here; *Yet shall they be as the wings of a Dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold.* So God will bring forth his Dove with glory out of all these abasements at length. So much for the title of Dove. It followes,

My Vndefiled.

Vndefiled is a high word to be applied to the Church

Church of God here, for the Church groaning under infirmities, to be counted perfect and undefiled ; but Christ who judgeth aright of his Church, and knowes best what she is ; Heyet thus judgeth of her. But how is that ? *The Church is Vndefiled (especially) in that it is the Spouse of Christ, and cloathed with the robes of his Righteousnesse.* For there is an exchange so soone as ever we are united to Christ, our sinnes are upon him, and his Righteousnesse is made ours ; and therefore in Christ the Church is undefiled. Christ himselfe the second Person is the first lovely thing next the Father, and in Christ all things as they have relation to Him are loved, as they are in Him. Christs humane Nature is next loved to the second Person ; it is United, and is first pure, holy, and beloved : Then because the Church is Christ mysticall, it is near to him, and (in a manner , as near as that sacred Body of his, both making up one Christ mysticall, and so is amiable, and beloved even of God himselfe, who hath pure eyes ; yet in this respect lookest upon the Church as *Vndefiled*.

Christ and his Church are not to be considered as two, when we speake of this undefilednesse, but as one. And the Church having Christ with all that is Christs, they have the field, and the pearle in the field together; and Christ giving himselfe to the Church, he gives his Righteousnesse, his perfection, and holines, all is the Churches.

But how can it be the Churches , when it is

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is not in the Church, but in Christ?

It is safe for the Church that it is in Christ, who is perfect and *Vndefiled* for us, to make us appear so: And so it is in Christ the second *Adam* for our good: it is not in him as another person; but it is in Him, as the Churches head, that make both one Christ. The hand and the foot see not; but both hand and foot have benefit by the eye that sees for them. There is no member of the body understands, but the head does all for them. Put the case we have not absolute Righteousnesse, and undefilednesse in our owne natures and persons inhering in us. Yet we have it in Christ that is one with us, who hath it for our good. It is ours: For all the comfort and good that we may have by it; and thereupon, *The Church in Christ is undefiled*; yea even then when it feeles its owne defilements. And here ariseth that wondrous contradiction that is found in a beleevers apprehension. The nature of faith is to apprehend Righteousnesse, in the sense of sinne; Happiness, in the sense of misery, and favour in the sense of displeasure.

And the ground of it is; Because that at the same time, the soule may be in some measure defiled in it selfe, and yet notwithstanding be undefiled in her head and husband Christ. Hence the guilty soule, when it feeles corruption and sinne, yet notwithstanding doth see it selfe holy, and cleane in Christ the Head, and so at once there is a conscience of sin, and no more conscience of sin, as the Apostle saith, *Heb.10.2.* when we believe

leeve in Christ, and are purged with his bloud, that is, there is no more guilt of ſin binding over to eternall damnation, yet notwithstanding alwayes there is a conſcience of finne, for we are guilty of infirmities, And if we ſay we have no ſin, we lyē and deceiver our ſelves.

But, How can this be that there ſhould be conſcience of finne, and no conſcience of ſin, a ſinner, and yet a perfect Saint and vndeſiled?

The Conſcience knowes its owne imperfection, ſo it is defiled, and accuſeth of finne: And as it looks to Christ, ſo it ſees it ſelue pure, and purged from all ſin; Here is the conqueſt, fight, and the viſtory of *Faith* in the deepest ſeſe of finne, pollution and defilement in our ſelves; at the ſame time to ſee an absolute and perfect Righteousneſſe in Iefus Christ. Herein is even the triuſh of *Faith* whereby it anſwers God. And Christ who ſees our imperfections (but it is to purge and cleane them away, not to damne us for them) at the ſame time he ſees us in his own love, cloathed with his Righteousneſſe, as one with himſelfe endowed with whatſoever he hath, his ſatisfaction and obedience being ours, as verily as any thing in the world is. Thus he looks on us, and thus faith looks upon him too, and together with the ſight and ſeſe of finne, at the ſame time, it apprehends Righteousneſſe, perfect Righteousneſſe, and ſo is vndeſiled. This is the maie point in Religion, and the comfort of Christians to ſee their perfection in Christ Iefus. And to be lost in themſelves (as it were) and

to

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1 Ioh. 1.10.

Object.

Anſw. I.

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Phil. 3.9.

to be only found in him, not having their own Righteousnesse, but the Righteousnesse of God in him. This is a mystery which none knowes but a beleev-ing soule ; none see corruption more, none see themselves freed more, they have an inward sight to see corruption, and an inward faith to see God takes not advantage at it. And surely there can be no greater honour to Christ then this, in the sense of sin, of wants, imperfections, stains, and blemishes ; yet to wrap our selves in the Righteousnesse of Christ God-man, and by faith being thus covered with that absolute Righteousnesse of Christ, with boldnesse to goe cloathed in the garments of this our elder Brother to the Throne of Grace. This is an honour to Christ, to attribute so much to his Righteousnesse, That being cloathed therewith, we can boldly breake through the fire of Gods justice, and all those terrible Attributes, when we see them all(as it were)satisfied fully in Christ : For Christ with his righteousness could go through the justice of God, having satisfied it to the full for us. And we being cloathed with this his Righteousnesse and satisfaction, may go through too.

2.

But besides that, there is another undefilednes in the Church, in respect to which she is called *undefiled*, that is, *in purity of disposition*, tending to perfection. And God respects her according to her better part, and according to what he will bring her in due time. For we are chosen unto perfection, and to be holy in his sight, and perfectly

fe<ty holy, undefiled and pure, we are not chosen to weake beginnings.

In choosing us, what did God aime at ? Did he aime at these imperfect beginnings to rest there ? No, we were elected and chosen to perfection : For as it is in this naturall life, God purposed that we should not only have all the limbs of men, but grow from infancy to activenesse and perfection : As God at first intended so much for our bodies, no question he intends as much also for the soule, that we should not onely have the lineaments of Christianity, a sanctified judgement with affections in part renewed ; but he hath chosen us to perfection by degrees. As the seed first lyes rotting in the ground, then growes to a stalke, and then to an eare : So Gods wisedome shines here by bringing things by degrees to perfection and undefilednesse. His wisedome will have it thus, or else his power might have it otherwaies, because he will have us to live by *Faith*, to trust his mercy in Christ, and not to the undefilednesse that is begun in us, but to admire that which we have in Christ himselfe.

And indeed it is the charecter of a judicious beleeving Christian soul, that he can set a price, and value the Righteousnesse of Christ out of himselfe, labouring, living and dying, to appeare in that, and yet to comfort and sustaine himselfe during this conflict and fight between the flesh and the Spirit, that in time this inherent *Grace* shall be brought to perfection.

And

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Gal. 5.24.

Gal. 5.24.

Eph. 2.6.

And Christ he looks upon us, as he meaneſt to perfect the worke of Grace in us by little and little, as he meaneſt to purge and cleanse us, as Ephes. 5.26,27. The end of Redemption is, that he might purge his Church, and ſo never leave it, till he have made it a glorious Spouse in Heaven. He looks upon us, as we ſhall be ere long, and therefore we are ſaid to be dead to ſinne, while we are but dying to it. And (ſaith he) you have crucified the flesh, with the affections and luſts thereof, when we are but crucifying it; but it is ſaid ſo, because it is as ſure to be done, as if it were done already. As a man, when he is condemned, and going to his execution, he is a dead man: So there is a ſentence paſſed upon ſinne and corruption, it ſhall be abolished and die. Therefore it is dead in ſentence, and is dying in execution. It is done, They that are in Christ have crucified the flesh, with the luſts thereof. It is as ſure to faith as if it were done already. So we are ſaid to ſit in heavenly places with Christ, we are with him already: For Christ having takē us ſo near in affection to himſelfe, he will never leave us, till he have made us ſuch as he may have full contentment in, which is in Heaven, when the contract between him and us ſhall be fulfilled in conſummation of the marriage. Thus faith lookeſ, and Christ lookeſ thus upon us: Which ſhould comfort us in weakneſſe, that God regards us not in our preſent im- perfections, but as he meaneſt to make us ere long. In the meane time, that he may looke upon us in love, he looks upon us in the obedience of his ſon,

ſon, in whom whatſoever is good ſhall be per-
fected at the laſt.

3 E.R. VII.

Uſe I.

What ſhould we doe then, if Christ doth make his Church thus, *his Love, his Dove, his Vndeſiled,* by making his love to meet in it as the Centre thereof, whereunto he doth confine all his love (as it were) we ſhould confine our love to him againe, and have no love out of Christ, ſince he hath no love out of us : There ſhould be an ever-laſting muthal shining, and refection betweene him and the ſoule. We ſhould lay open our ſoules to his love (as indeed he desires especially the communion of our affections) we ſhould reflect love to him againe. This perpetuall everlaſting entercourſe between Christ and his Spouse, is her maine happinesse here, and her eternall happinesse in Heaven; In looking on him, who hath done ſo much for us, he shines on us, and we looke backe againe upon him. Doth Christ love us ſo intimitely, and ſo invincibly, that no indig-nities nor ſinne could overcome his love? which made, that he endured that which he hates moſt, *to become ſinne for us;* nay the want of that, which was more to him then all the world, the want of the ſense of the favour of God for a time, *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me?* Hath Christ thus infinitely loved us, and ſhall not we backe again make him our love? In their degree the Saints of God have all done ſo. It was a good ſpeech of Ignatius the Martyr, *My Love Christ was crucified.* So a Christian ſhould ſay, *My love was crucified, my love dyed, my love is in heaven:*

1 Cor. 5.21.

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Phil. 3.20.

Col. 3.1.

Use 2.

Use 3.

beaven: And for the things on earth I lovethem, as they have a beame of him in them, as they lead me to him; but he is my love, there my love is pitched, even upon him, this is the ground of these Scripture phrases, But our conversation is in heaven, from whence we looke for the Saviour, the Lord Iesus Christ, &c. and set your affections on the things that are above. Why? Christ our love is there, the soule is more where it loves, then where its residence is. It dies(as it were)to other things, and lives in the things it loves; therefore our thoughts and affections, our joy and delight should be drawn up to Christ; for indeed his love hath such a magneticall attractive force, that where it is, it will draw up the heavy yron, the grosse soule, and make it heavenly; for there is a binding, a drawing force in this excellent affection of love.

My Love, my Dove, &c.

There are all words of sweetnesse, he labours to expresse all the affection he can, for the conscience is subiect to upbraid, and to clamour much, so that there must be a great deale of perswasion, to still the accusing conscience of a sinner, to set it down, make it quiet, and perswade it of Gods love. Therefore he useth all heavenly Rhetorickē to perswade and move the affections.

In this that the Church is undefiled in Christ, Let us learne when afflicted in conscience, not so much to judge of our selves by what we feele in our selves, as by what faith suggests. In Christ there-

therefore let us judge of our selves by what we areas in him. We are *poore* in our selves, but have *riches* in him ; we *die* in our selves in regard of this life, but we have a *life* in him, an *eternall life*; and we are *sinners* in our selves ; but we have a *Righteousnesse* in him, whereby we are righteous in his sight. We are *foolish, unskilfull, and ignorant* in our selves ; but he is our *wisedome* in all what-soever is amisse in us. Let us labour to see a full supply of our wants made up in Christ, this is to glorifie God as much as if we could fulfill the Law perfectly. If we were *as undefiled as Adam was*, we could not glorifie God more, then when we find our selves, and our conscience guilty of sinnes , yet thus by the Spirit of God to goe out of our selves, and to see our selves in Christ ; and thus to cast our selves on him, embrace him, and take that *gift of God* given us, Christ offered to us, because God so commands, we honour God more, then if we had the obedience that *Adam had* at first before his fall : For now in the covenant of Grace, he will be glorified in his mercy, in his forgiving, forbearing , rich transcendent mercy ; and in going beyond all our unworthiness and sinnes, by shewing that there is a *Righteousnesse* provided for us, the *Righteousnesse* of *God-man*, whose obedience and satisfaction is more then our disobedience , because it is the *disobedience* of man onely ; but his *Obedience* and *Righteousnesse* is the *Obedience*, and *Righteousnesse* of *God-man* : so it satisfieth divine justice ; and therfore ought to satisfie Conscience to the full,

1 Cor. 5.20.

Ioh. 4.10.

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our faith must answer Christ's carriage to us; we must therefore account our selves in him *undeſiled*, because he accounts us so, not in our selves, but as we have a being in him, we are *undeſiled*.

Againe, see here Christ accounts us (even in regard of habituall grace) *undeſiled*, though we have for the present many corruptions. Let us therefore learne a lesson of moderation of so excellent a teacher; let us not be ashamed to learne of our Saviour. What Spirit shall we think they have, that will unchurch Churches, because they have ſome defilement and unbrotherly brethren, accounting them no *Churches*, no *Brethren*, because they have ſome imperfections. Why hath not Christ a quarrell to the Church then? is he blind? doth his love make him blind? No, he feeth corruption, but he feeth better things, ſomwhat of his owne that makes him overlooke thoſe imperfections, because they are ſuch as he meanes to mortifie, ſubdue, weare away, and to fire out by the power of his Spirit, which as fire shall waste all thoſe corruptions in time. So it is with the Church; put the caſe, ſhe hath ſome corruptions, that it be not with her, as it ſhould be, yet ſhee is a Church notwithstanding. The Church of *Corinth* (we ſee) Paul ſtiles them *Saints* and *Brethren*, with all thoſe ſweet names, notwithstanding they had many corruptions among them.

1 Cor. i.

vſe 5.

Wee have a company of malignant ſpirits worse then theſe a great deale, Atheiſticall perſons

sions that have no Religion at all, who out of malice and envy watch for the halting of good Christians, who can see nothing but defilement in those that have any good in them, nothing but hypocrisy, mopeishnesse, all that is naught, who if they can devise any blemish, put it upon them; whereas Christ sees a great deale of ill in the Church, but he sees it to pardon, subdue, and to pity the Church for it, extolling and magnifying its goodnessse. What spirits are those of, that watch to see imperfections in others, that their hearts tell them are better then they, that they may only disgrace them by it; for goodness they will see none.

And likewise, it shoulde teach us not to wrong our selves with false judgement. We shoulde have a double eye, one eye to see that which is amisse in us, our owne imperfections, thereby to carry our selves in a perpetuall humility; but an other eye of Faith, to see what we have in Christ, our perfection in him, so to account of our selves, and glory in this our best being, that in him we have a glorious being, such an one whereby God esteenies us perfect, and undefiled in him onely. The one of which sightes shoulde inforce us to the other, which is one end, why God in this world leaves corruption in his children. Oh! since I am thus undefiled, shall I rest in my selfe? Is there any harbour for me to rest in mine owne Righteousnesse? O no, it drives a man out of all harbour; Nay, I will rest in that Righteousnesse, which God hath wrought by Christ, who is

Use E.

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God-Man, That will endure the sight of God, being cloathed, with which I can endure the presence of God: So this sight of our owne unworthinesse and wants, should not be a ground of discouragement, but a ground to drive us perfectly out of our selves, that by faith we might renew our title to that Righteousnesse, wherein is our especiall glory. Why should we not judge of our selves as Christ doth? Can we see more in our selves then hee doth? yet notwithstanding all he sees, hee accounts us as *Vnde filed.*

vſe 7.

Againe, since he accounts us *unde filed*, because he meanes to make us so, and now lookes on us, as we shall be; In all our foyles and infirmities, let us comfort our selves, it shall not thus be alwayes with us. O! this flesh of mine shall fall and fall still, and shall decay as *Sauls* house, and the Spirit at the last shall conquer in all this. I am not chosen to this beginning, to this conflicting course of life. I am chosen to triumph, to perfection of Grace, this is my comfort. Thus we should comfort our selves, and set upon our enemies, and conflict in this hope of victory, I shall get the better of my self at the last. Imperfection should not discourage, but comfort us in this world; we are chosen to perfection; Let us still rejoice, in that we are chosen to *Sanctification*, which is a little begun, being an earnest of other blessings; let us not rest in the pledge or in the earnest, but labour for a further pledge of more strength and grace: For those that have the Spirit

rit of Christ, will striveto be as much unspotted, and as heavenly as they can ; To fit themselves for that heavenly Condition as much as may be, when, because they cannot be in heaven, yetthey will converse there as much as they can ; and because they cannot be with such company altogether, they will be as much as may be, labouring as they are able to be that which they shall be hereafter. Imperfection contents them not ; and therefore they pray still in the Lords Prayer, *Thy Kingdome come.* While there is any imperfection, their hearts are enlarged more and more, nothing contents them but perfection. And indeed God accounts us thus unsported for this end, because he would encourage us. Where he sees the will and endeavour, he gives the title of the thing desired.

VER. 3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on?*

I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them ?

Here is an ingenious confession made by the Church of her own untowardnesse, notwithstanding all Christs heavenly Rhetoricke and perswasion that he did use ; yet she drawes backe, and seemes to have reason so to doe. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on againe to let thee in, I have washed my feet, &c.* It is a phrase taken from the custome of those hot countries, wherein they used to wash their feet. *I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them to rise and open the doore to thee ?* There is a spirituall meaning herein, as if she had said, I have some ease by this

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Observ. I.

sleepy profession, some freedome from evill tongues, and some exemption, and immunity from someroubles I was in before. I was then perhaps too indiscreet, now wilt thou call me againe to those troubles that I have wisely avoided? No, *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* I affect this estate very well; I am content to be as I am without further troubling of my selfe; Thus the Church puts off Christ. This I take to be the meaning of the words, That which is observable is this, That it is not an easie matter to bring the soule and Christ together into neare fellowship. Wee see here how the Church drawes backe; for the flesh moves either not to yeeld at all to duty, or to be cold,uncertaine, and unsetled therein. The flesh knowes that a neare communion with Christ cannot stand with favouring any corruption, and therefore the flesh will doe something, but not enough, it will yeeld to something, but not to that that it should doe, to that communion and fellowship that wee ought to have with Christ. To instance in some particulars, as a rule and measure to somewhat of whiche we should be.

A Christian life should be nothing but a communion and entercourse with Christ. A walking in the Spirit, and to be spirituall, and to favour the things of the Spirit altogether, he should study to adorne his profession by a lively and cheerfull performance of duty, and be exemplary to others; and should be in such a frame,

as he should walke continually in the comforts of the Holy-Ghost undismayed, and undaunted, And abound in the fruits of the Spirit, and doe all the good he can wheresoever he comes ; He should keep himselfe unspotted of the world, goe against the streame, and be continually in such a temper, as it should be the joy of his heart to be dissolved, and to be with Christ. One might goe on thus in a world of particulars, which would be too long. If we could attaine to this excellency, it were an happy life, a Heaven upon Earth, this we should ay me at. Will the flesh endure this, thinke you? No, it will not; Which you shall see more particularly in this next Observation, which is,

That one way, whereby the unregenerate part in us binders this communion with Christ, and the shunning of a beleever in a Christian course, is by false pretences, reasons and excuses. I have washed my feet, I have put off my coat, &c.

The flesh never wants excuses and pretences (there was never yet any came to hell, but they had some seeming pretence for their comming thither) to shift and shuffle off duties ; there was never yet any carelesse sinfull course, but it had the flesh to justifie it with one reason or other; and therefore it is good to understand the Sophistical shifts of the flesh, and pretences and shewes which it hath; and as it is good to know the truth of God, and of Christ revealed in his Word, so is it to know the falsenesse and deceitfulnesse of our owne hearts, they are both mysteries almost alike, hard to be knowne. Labour we then more and

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Act. 9.39.

1am.1.27.

2 Tim.4.8.

Observ. 2.

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and more to know the falsehood of our owne disposition, and to know the truth of God: To give instance in a few particulars : You see in the Church the difficulty of her communion with Christ comes from the idle pretences and excuses she hath. Every one hath his severall pretexts, as his state and condition is. We think we should be loosers, if we give our selves to that degree of goodnesse which others doe, whereas God doth curse those blessings which men get with neglect of duty to him. If we seek first the kingdome of Heaven, all other things that are good for us shall be cast upon us.

Obiect.

Thou shalt lose the favour of such an one ?

Answe.

Never care for that favour thou canst not keep with Gods favour, *the favour of man is a snare*, take heed of that favour that snares thee: thou lovest their favour and compaay ; but thou gainest the favour of Christ , and company of Angels.

Obiect.

But they will raile on thee, and reproach thee with thy old sins ?

Answe.

Care not, *God will doe thee good for that*, as David said, when Shemei cursed him.

Obiect.

But I shall lose my pleasure ?

Answe.

O but such pleasures end in death; they are but pleasures of sin for a season, & thou shal not lose by the change, *the wayes of wisdome are pleasant wayes*, one day religiouly spent in keeping of a good conscience, what a sweet farewell hath it ? *Toy is in the habitation of therighteous*. It becomes the Righteous to be joyfull. How ever outwardly it seemes,

seemes, yet there is a Paradise within. Many such objections the flesh makes, some take scandall at the prosperity of the wicked, and affliction of the Saints, and from hence take occasion to rot in their dregs of sin; but what saith Christ, *Happy is the man who is not offended in me.* As for the prosperity of the wicked, envy them not, they stand in slippery places, and flourish like a greene bay-tree, but presently they vanish. Take no offence at them nor at the crosse, looke not at this, but at the ensuing comfort. *Blessed are they that suffer for Righteousnesse sake,* bind such words to your head as your crowne, God reserves the best comforts to the worst times, his people never find it otherwise.

I but if I be thus precise, the times are so bad, I shall be alone.

Complaine not of the times when thou makest them worse, thou shouldest make the times better, the worse the times are, the better be thou, for this is thy glory, to be good in an evill generation. This was *Lots* glory. Paul tels what ill times they were: But saith he, *Our conversation is in Heaven, from whence we looke for a Saviour.* What brings destruction on Gods people, but their joyning with the wicked. Whenthey joyned with the children of men, then came the floud: These and the like pretences keep men altogether from goodnessse, or else from such a measure, as may bring honour to God, and comfort to themselves.

Or if men be great, why this is not honourable

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Mat. 11. 6.

Mat. 5. 10.

Object.

Answ.

Phil. 3. 20.

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ble to doe thus, as you know what Michall said to David, *How glorious was the King of Israell this day? like a foole, &c.* To attend upon the word of God with reverence, to make conscience of Religion, O it stands not with greatnesse, &c. But the Spirit of God answereth this in him, *I will yet be more vile for God.* It is a mans honour here to stand for God, and for good things ; and it is our honour, that God will honour us so much.

2.
The excuses of
worldlings.
I Tim. 4.8.

*Luk. 10.42.**Psal. 1.2.**Deut. 17.18,
19.**Hag. 1.2.*

Those likewise that are *worldly* have excuses also ; *Alas I must tend my Calling,* and they have Scripture for it to. *He that provides not for his family is worse then an Infidell,* as if God had set up any callings to hinder the calling of Christianity, as if that were not the greatest calling, and the best part that will abide with us for ever, as if it were not the part of a Christian to redeem time from his calling to the duties of Christianity. I have no time (faith the worldling) what will you have me to doe ? Why, what time had *David* when he meditated on the law of God day and night ? he was a King, the King is bound to study the Scriptures : And yet whose employment is greater then the employment of the chiefe Magistrate ?

And thus every one as their state and condition is, they have severall pretences and excuses. Those that are young, their excuse is, we have time enough for these things hereafter. Others, as those that were negligent to build the second Temple, *The time is not yet say they;* when as the

uncertainty of this life of ours, the weightinesse of the businesse, the danger of the custome of sin, the ingaging of our hearts deeper and deeper into the world, makes it a more difficult thing to be a Christian. It more and more darkens our understanding the more we sinne, and the more it estrangeth our affections from good things, the more we have run out in an evill course. Time is a special mercy, but when thou hast not time only but the meanes, good company, and good motions, thou mayest never have such a gale againe, thy heart may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sinne. Againe, who would want the comforts of Religion for the present (as Austin saith) *I have wanted thy sweetnesse too long.* What folly is it to want the sweetnesse and comfort of Religion so long as wee may have it.

Some others pretend, *The uncomfortableness of Religion, I shall want my comforts,* when as indeed there is no sound comfort without having our hearts in a perfect communion with Christ, walking with God, and breaking off from our evill courses. What is the reason of discomforts, unresolvednesse, and unsetlednesse? when we know not where we are, whether we goe, or what our condition is, unsetlednesse breeds discomfort, and indeed there is no pleasure so much, as the pleasure that the serving of God hath with it. As the fire hath light and heate alwayes in it, so there is no holy action that wee performe throughly, but as it hath an increase of strength,

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Rev. 2.7.

Prov. 26.13.

Prov. 26.16.

so there is an increase of comfort and joy annexed to it. There is a present reward annexed to all things that are spiritually good ; they carry with them present peace and joy, the conscience hath that present comfort, which consumes all discouragements whatsoever, as is alwayes found in the experience of that soule, that hath won so much of it selfe, as to breake through discouragements to the practise of holy duties. Believers have a joy and comfort, *that others know not of*, an hidden kind of *Manna*, and contentment.

These and a thousand such like discouragements men frame to themselves. My health will not serve, I shall endanger my life. There is a *Lion in the way* (saith the sluggard) who with his excuses *thinks himselfe wiser than the wisest in the City*. There is none so wise as the sluggard ; for belly policy teacheth him a great many excuses, which he thinks will goe for wisedome, because by them he thinks to sleep in a whole skin ; He is but a sluggard for all that ; and though he plead, *Yet a little while, Poverty*, not onely outward, but spirituall poverty, and barrennesse of soule *will come upon him as an armed man*, and leave him destitute of grace and comfort, when he shall see at the last what an evill course of life he hath led, that he hath yeelded so much to his lazie flesh to be drawne away by discouragements from duties, that he was convinced were agreeable to the word. *New what may be the grounds and causes of these false Pretences and Excuses, which*

which hinder us from holy duties. There be many causes.

First of all, one cause of this in us is this, Naturally so far as we are not guided by a better Spirit then our owne, we are inclined too much to the earthly present things of this life; because they are present and pleasant; and we are nuzled up in them; and whatsoever puls us from them is unwelcome to us. This is one ground.

Againe, joyne with this, that naturally since the fall, the soule of man having lost wisedome to guide it to that which is truly good, hath wit enough left to devise untoward shifts, to excuse that which is evill. In this fallen estate the former abilities to devise things throughly good, is turned to a matter of untoward wit joyned with shifting. God made man right, but he hath sought out many inventions. Carnall wit serves carnall will very well, and carnall lusts never want an advocate to plead for them, namely carnall reason. From the bent therefore of the soule to ill things, Pleasure, Ease, and Honour (such a condition as pleaseth the outward man since the fall) the bent and weight of the soule goeth this way, together with wit: having lost the Image of God in holy wisedome, there is shifting. This is a ground also why delayes are joyned with shifts.

Againe, there is another ground, that *Corrupt Nature* (in this like the Devill and sin) which never appeare in their owne colours, sets a man on this way. Who would not hate the Devill, if he should

Causes of our
delayes in put-
ting off spiritu-
all duties.

1.
Our inclination
to earthly
things.

2.
Because our de-
praved wit na-
turally aboun-
deth in shifts.

Eccl. 7.2,9.

3.
Because of cor-
rupt natures
likenesse to
the Devill.

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should appeare in his owne likenesse : or sinne if it should appeare in its owne colours : and therefore wit stretcheth it selfe to finde out shifts. For sayes the heart, unlesse there be some shifts and pretences to cover my shame, I shall be knowne to be what I am indeed, which I would be loth were done : I would have the sweet, but not the shame of sinne, the credit of Religion , but not put my selfe to the cost which commeth with true Religion , to deny my selfe. *Corrupt courses never appeare in their owne colours, they are like the Devil for this.*

4.
*Because of our
hypocrisie.*

And then againe, Naturally there is a great deale of hypocrisie in us ; we may doe duties to satisfie Conscience (for somewhat must be done) to heare now and then, read and come to prayer betwixt sleeping and waking (yawning prayers) when we can doe nothing else ; somewhat must be done, conscience else will cry out of us that we are Atheists, and shall be damned, some flubbering service must be done therefore. Yet notwithstanding herein is our hypocrisie, that we cannot bring our hearts to doe it, as it should be done to purpose ; for though it be true that there is much imperfection in the best actions, the best performances ; yet this is hypocrisie, when men doe not doe it as God may accept it, and as it may yeeld themselves comfort. The heart drawes backe, duties it will and must doe, but yet will not doe them as it shall have comfort by them. This is inbred in the heart naturally,

con-

conscience forceth to doe something, though the flesh and corruption puls backe. This is the disposition of all men, till they have got the victory of their owne Atheisticall hearts.

And then againe, Another ground may be this, a false conceit of God, and of Christ, that they will take any thing at our hands, because we love our selves, and thinke that we doe very well ; we thinke that God is such a one as we are, as it is, *Psal. 50. 21. Thou thoughtest that I was like unto thee, &c.* that God will be put off with any thing, and any excuse will serve the turne. You have not a swearer, a filthy carelesse person, *But he thinks God is mercifull, and Christ died for sinners, and I was provoked to it, &c.* still he thinks to have some excuse for it, and that they will stand good with God. This *Atheisme* is in us naturally; and when we are palpably o blame in the judgement of others, and our selves in our sober wits ; yet wee put more ignorance and carelesnesse on God then on our selves. *Tush, God regards it not,* it is the times, I would be better : It is company whom I must yeeld unto, &c. They thinke God will accept these things from them.

But one maine ground thereof is, The scandals that we meet withall in the world, which (indeed) is a ground, because our owne false hearts are willing to catch at any thing. You see (say they) these men that make profession of Religion what they are (and then the Devill will thrust some Hypocrisie into the profession of

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5.
Because of a
false conceit of
God and of
Christ.

6.
The scandal's
we meet with-
all in the
world.

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Religion) and they judge all by one or two (and will be sure to doe it) therein stands their ingenuity ; and if they can see any infirmity in them that are incomparably better then themselves, Oh they are safe, here is warrant enough to dislike Religion and all good courses, because some doe so and so, as if the course of Religion were the worse for that. Thus they wrap themselves in those excuses, as men doe their hands to defend them from pricks. This is the vile poysone of our hearts that will be naught, and yet notwithstanding will have reason to be so. The speech is, *wickednesse never wanted pretexts* : which as it is true of great wickednesse, much more is it of that which goes in the world for *drowsie, lukewarme profession*, under which many sinke to hell before they are aware. They never want reason and pretexts to cover their sinne, there is a mint and forge of them in the soule, it can coine them suddenly. Thus wee see our wits doe serve us excellently well, to lay blocks in our owne way to hinder us from Heaven ; we are dunces and dull to doe any thing that is spiritually good, whereof we are incapable. But if it be to lay blocks in our owne way to Heaven, to quarrell with God and his Ordinances, with the doctrine of salvation, with the instruments, teachers, and those that lead us a better way, that our wit will serve for. But to take a course to doe us good another day, to lay up comforts, in which we might end and close up our dayes, there we are back

backward, and have shift upon shift. This is added for the further explication of it, because of the necessity of the point : For, except our hearts be discovered to us, we shall never know what Religion meanes, save to know so much as may through the winding, turning, shifting, and falsehood of our owne Nature, bring us to hell : Wherein we are worse enemies to our selves then the Devill is, who could not hurt us, unlesse we did betray our selves. But hee hath factors in us to deale for him, our owne carnall wit and affection, they hold correspondence with him, whence all the mischiefe that he doth us, is by that intercourse that our nature hath with Satan : That is the *Dalilah* which betrayeth all the *Sampsons* (sound worthy Christians in the world) to their spirituall enemies. Therefore, we can never be sufficiently instructed, what a vile nature we have so opposite to Religion, as far as it is saving. Corrupt nature doth not oppose it so far as it is slubbored over, but so far as may bring us to that state we should be in, we have no worse enemies then our owne hearts. Therefore let us watch over our selves continually, and use all blessed means appointed of God, whereby we may escape out of this dangerous sleepy disposition of soule, which cost the Church so deare, as we shall heare (God willing) hereafter.



The eighth Sermon.

CANT. V. III.

I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?



E are now by Gods assistance to speake of the remedies against the lazie distempers we are prone unto in spirituall things, where we left off the last day.

Quest.

What course should we take then to come forth from this distempered lasinesse, that we may attaine a spirituall tast and relish of heavenly things: so as not to loath religious exercisles, or delay and put them off with excuses.

Answ.
I.
Resolve not to consult with flesh and bloud in any thing: For it alwayes counsell's us for ease, as Peter counselled Christ, *Master pitty thy selfe.* So we have a nature in us like unto Peter, spare, favour, pity thy selfe. Like Hevah, and Iobs wife, we have a corrupt nature that is alwayes soliciting from God, and drawing us unto vanity. Take heed of counselling with flesh and bloud; for if men were in a City environed round about with enemies, would they consult with

Resolve not to consult with flesh and bloud in any thing:

flesh and bloud.

Iob 2.

with them what they should doe for defence
of the City : were it not a mad parte and is it not
a greater madnesse when Christians will con-
sult with flesh and bloud what they should doe
in duties of obedience, which will alwayes put
us upon tearmes of ease, the favour of men, con-
tent and the like, which if a man yeeld to, he
shall never enter into heaven. Take heed there-
fore of consulting with our enemy, seeing Satan
hath all the correspondency he hath by that ene-
my which we harbour in our bosome. In which
case the hurt he doth us by his sophistry comes
by our selves, we betray our selves by our carnall
reason, whereby Satan mingleth himselfe with
our imaginations and conceits. Let us therefore
beware we listen not to the counsell of flesh and
bloud, especially when the matter comes to suf-
ferring once ; for there of all other things flesh
and bloud doth draw backe. Every one hatha
Peter in himselfe, that saith, *Spare thy selfe* : Thou
art indiscreet to venture thy selfe upon this and
that hazard. But where the judgement is convin-
ced of the goodnesse of the cause, whether it be
Religion or *Justice*, for the first or for the second
table that matters not : If the judgement be con-
vinced of the thing, then consult not with flesh
and bloud whatsoever the suffering be. It is not
necessary that we should live in riches, honours,
pleasures and estimation with the world. But it
is necessary wee should live honest men and
good Christians; therefore when flesh and bloud
objecteth in this kind, consult not with it : First,

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1 COR. 15.50.

Rom. 8.

3.
To be re olute
in spirituall un-
der takings.

Because it is an enemy, and therefore is to be suspected and neglected : Secondly, Because it is said, *Flesh and bloud shall not inherite the kingdome of Heaven*; and therefore we should practise that first lesson in Religion, *Heavenly wisedome*; To ayde us wherein, Christ (knowing what an enemy we are to our selves in the wayes of God) saith, *Let a man deny himselfe, and take up his Croffe and follow me*. There is no following of Christ, considering that our flesh is so full of cavils and excuses, unlesse we practise that heavenly lesson of Christ, *to deny our selves*, our whole selfe, our wit and reason in the matters of God : our will and affections. Say nay to all the sluggishnesse of the flesh ; silence all presently as soone as ever they discourage thee from holy wayes. Consider whence they come : which is enough; from Gods and our enemy, and the worst enemy we have that lyeth in our owne bosome. And to inable us the better, marke what Paul saith, *We are no more debtors to the flesh, &c.* We owe nothing to it ; I owe not such obedience, such subiecti- onto the flesh and carnall reason; I have renounced it long since. What am I obnoxious to a man unto whom I owe no service? We owe the flesh no service or obedience, what shall we yeeld to that which wee have long since renounced?

And withall, *In Spirituall courses, let us arme our selves with resolution*: First, conclude, *Is it so, or not so*, let our judgements be convinced; for *Resolution* is a disposition arising from the will immedi- ately;

ately; but it is of the will, by sound judgement convinced of the goodness of the thing, after which the will resolves. Get resolution from soundnesse of conviction, that such things are good, and that they are best for us, and best for us at this time, the sooner the better, that there is an absolute necessity to have them, and that they are everlastingly good: O these considerations will put us on amaine to obtaine the same. It is our duty, and we shall sin against God, against our Conscience, against the Spirit of God, and against others that take like liberty by our examples) If we yeeld to our base lusts and suggestions in this kind.

And to help Resolution the more, let us have before our eyes the examples of Gods worthies, who (like unto Davids worthies, who brake through the Hoast of the Philistims for water) have in all ages broken through all discouragements, and made conscience more to please God, to hold communion and fellowship with Christ, then to hold any correspondency with the world. Looke to blessed Paul, *What do ye vexing of me and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to goe to Ierusalem, but to die for Christs sake.* And looke to Christ, how he shakes off Peter, *Get thee behind me Satan, &c.* Looke to Moses, how hee shooke off all the solicitations of a Court; *Because he had an eye to the recompence of the reward.* Looke to Ioshuah, *I and my house will serve the Lord.* Let others of the world doe what they will: If others will goe to the Devill let

A help to Res-
olution.

2 Sam. 23.16.

Act. 21.13.

Mat. 16.23.
Heb. 11.26.

Ios. 24.15.

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Neh. 6. 11.

Heb. 12. 1.

Heb 12. 2.

Heb 12. 3.

them, for my selfe, I and my house (those that I have charge of) will serve the Lord. This was a noble resolution which was in good *Nehemiah*, *Shall such a man as I flye?* what shall I flye? shall I doe this? yeeld to this base discouragement? shall I discourage others (like those *spies of Canaan*) by mine example? Hence it is that *Heb. 11.* In that notable Chapter, *That little booke of Martyrs*, after the catalogue of those worthies set downe there, that which we are exhorted and pointed to in the beginning of the next Chapter, is unto the practise of the like vertues in imitation, having before us *such a Cloud of witnesses*, wherewith being compassed, the exhortation is, *Let us therefore shake off every thing that presseth down, and the sinne that hangeth so fast on, &c.* As the *Cloud* was a guide to them to *Canaan* out of *Egypt*: so the *Cloud* of good examples is as it were a light to goe before us, to the *heavenly Canaan*.

In this case above all, let us looke to Christ, *Who is the Author and finisher of our faith.* This will make us break through discouragements, and resolve indeed. What could hinder him? his love was so fiery, that nothing could hinder him to come from Heaven to the Womb of the Virgin, from thence to the Crosse, and so to the Grave, to be abased lower then ever any creature was. His love to us so carried him through all discouragements and disgraces. *Consider him, who endured such speaking against of sinners.* The consideration of Christ's love and example will carry

carry us through all discouragements whatsoever.

And further, Let us be able by sound reasons to justifie the wayes of God, and to answer cavils, to give account of what we doe to our selves and others, with reasons why we sanctifie the Sabbath, have such Communion with God in Prayer, neglect the fashions of the world, &c. To have reasons ready from Scripture, is an excellent thing, when we are able to justifie whatsoever we doe by the Word, against all the quarrels of our owne hearts and others. When we are led to do things onely by the example of others, or bie respects, then we are oft times put to it on the sudden by temptations, being not able to justifie what we doe. Let us labour therefore to doe things upon good grounds, and be able to justifie all the wayes of Religion, as they are easily justified; for nothing in this world stands with so much reason, as exactnesse in the wayes of God. There is so much reason for nothing in the world, as to be not onely Christians, but exact Christians, as Paul saith to Agrippa, would to God you were not almost, but altogether as I am, saving these bonds. To make conscience of all wayes and courses, it stands with the most reason of the world, so to justifie Religion by reasons unanswerable, that may set downe corrupt nature, and stop the mouth of the Devill himselfe: And herein let us propound sound and strong questions to our selves often; are those things (that I am moved to doe) good? or are they not?

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3.

To have good
grounds and
sound reasons
for all we doe

Aet. 26.39.

To help on rea-
son, we must of-
ten propound
strong questi-
ons to our
selves.

If

SER.VIII.

Mat.12.

If they be good, why doe I not doe them? If they be bad, why doe I doethem at all? If they be good, why doe I sticke at them? how doe I prove them to be good? have alway ready some Scripture, or reason from thence which is as good. The reasons of the word are most divinely strong, let them be ready against all Objections whatsoever; as against sleight oathes, thinke of that of Christ, *that we must give an account for all idle words*, how much more for Atheisticall oathes: so against grosser sinnes learne reason; a civill man, an Heathen would not doe thus.

So also when the flesh moveth us to any backwardnesse in religious courses, let us have some Scripture ready, or reasons deducted from it. As *From the Dignity of our Profession, from the great Hopes we have to be glorious another day*. And reason the matter, how doth this that I am moved to suit with my Hopes and expectation to come? how furthers it my journey homewards? And consider this likewise, *That no excuse will serve the turne at the day of judgement, but such an one as ariseth from an invincible infirmity, or an unremovable impediment*; such an excuse taken from an invincible infirmity, may then serve the turne: As when we cannot possibly doe a thing from impediments, that all the meanes in the world cannot remove: As a poore man cannot be libe-
rall, &c. Excuses also fetcht from impossible im-
pediments; as from invincible weakness may availe, if a man have an infirme body, that he
cannot

I.

From the Dignity of our profession.

2.

Consider what excuses may be sufficient at the day of judgement.

cannot doe that which another man can : these excuses with a gracious God will serve the turne ; which are not so much excuses, as a just plea : But otherwise, our untoward excuses will not serve the turne. What hindered them in the Gospell, who were invited to the Supper ? Excuses from *Oxen*, *Wives*, &c. Was it not lawfull to buy Oxen : and was it not lawfull for the married to take content in a Wife ? *another had married a Wife* ; were not all these things lawfull : very lawfull : The *Farne* hurts not, if it hinders not, nor the *Wife*, *Oxen*, nor any thing ; but in this case, when we regard these things more then the invitation to come to the feast of holy things : Here is the malice of the Devill, which brings that dolefull message, *They shall never taste of my feast*. There is such an infinite disproportion between the good of Religion, Peace of Conscience, Ioy in the Holy-Ghost here, and Heaven and Happinesse hereafter ; and between any thing in this world, that to alleadge any hindrance whereby we cannot keep a good conscience, and preserve assurance of salvation, is most extreame folly and Atheisme. I beleeve not a better life (the disproportion being so great between the state of this life and a better) if I fetch excuses from the things of this life, to keep me from Religion, the Feare of God, and working out my salvation with feare and trembling. These excuses will not serve the turne, not only with God, at the day of judgement; but also our owne consciences will tell us that we are Hypocrites

Luk.14.

SER.VIII.

crites to make such or such a plea; therfore when men become false, thereby to provide for wife or children, and take corrupt courses to keep them from Religion, with pretext of their callings (least they shoulde lose one day in seven) this imployment cannot prosper, which sleights over duties under false pretences. O ! they can toile for the pelfe of the world ; but for matters of their soules, they turne off all shamefully, as it there were not a God to judge them, a Heaven to reward them, or a Hell to punish them. Will such excuses serve the turne ? O no, they cannot with conscience, much lesse with God the Judge, who is greater then our conscience. This is another way to cut off these idle cavils, to consider that these excuses cannot serve the turne, neither to comfort conscience in this world, nor to uphold us in our plea at the day of judgement, Remember that.

4.
To insure our
selves to beare
the yoake of
Religion.

The danger of
ignorant old
age.

And then againe, *Let us insure our selves to beare the yoake of Religion from our youth*, which will make it easie afterwards. It were an excellent thing, if those who are young (in the prime of their yeares) would insure themselves to the exercise of Religion, this would make it easie unto them, to read the word of God, to open their spirits unto him in Prayer. It may please God hereby (though they be negligent herein) yet they may be called to Religion. But for an old man there is much work to doe to reade, to get any thing into his braine, when his memory is pestered with other things, and corrupt nature in him is

is armed with a world of excuses, that might have been prevented by a timely and seasonable training up in a course of Religion. Prophane young persons know not what they doe when they put off Religion. Have they excuses now, they will have many more hereafter, when Satan and corruption will be much stronger. O let them beate the yoake of Religion, that is, inure themselves to duties that become Christians, which may facilitate and make it easie and pliable, that it may not be harsh to our nature. If a man doe not heare, pray and read, he can never have Faith, Grace, Knowledge, Mortification of corruption (wherein Religion stands) but because these lead to duties that are hard to nature, and harsh, it is wisedome to inure young ones thereto betimes, that having used themselves to these preparing duties, they may be the more fitted for the essentiaall ones. That having things in the braine by reading and hearing, Grace may be wrought in the heart, it being a more easie passage from the braine to the heart. When a man is converted, it is an easie matter to bring it from the braine unto the heart, whereas a man that hath been negligent in his youth, must then be instructed in the principles of Religion. Therefore it is a miserable case (though men be never so politicke in the world) to have been negligent herein till age. It breeds a great deale of difficulty to them ere they can come to be in such a state as a Christian should be in. Remember this therefore, to doe as Paul adviseth Timothy, a yong man,

*That the longer
we put off Re-
ligion, the more
will be our ex-
cuses.*

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man, to exercise himself in Godliness : It is a good thing for all that are young to exercise themselves to all duties of Religion, or else pretences will grow up with age, whereby they will be indisposed every day more then other. Experience shewes it generally, we may beleieve it: if we will not, we shall find it hereafter too true by woefull experience.

5.

To inure our
selves to diffi-
culty and hard-
ship.

2 Tim. 2.3.

And then againe, by little and little, not only to be inured to the yoake of Religion, but likewise to endure difficulties, opposition and hardship; as the Apostle stands upon it to *Timothy*, To endure hardship and afflictions from the beginning. If the thing be good and warrantable, negle^te the speeches of the world. What are the speeches of a company of men in the state of nature, in their miserable condition, to regard them so as not to endure hardship in such things, of the goodness whereof we are convinced ? But in these dayes men take up a delicate profession of Religion, men will be religious, but they will suffer nothing, not a taunt or a scoffe, they will part with nothing, be at no losse, suffer no crosse, be at no paines with Religion further then may stand with all earthly content of this world. This delicate profession (if any thing among us) threateth the removing of the Gospell and blessed truths we enjoy, because we will not part with any pleasure now. How will they suffer afflictions for the Gospell (if such times come) that will not part with a vaine oath, a corrupt fashion of life, a superfluity, that will not part with a rotten un-

unsavoury discourse, which discovereth a rotten Spirit, and infecteth others. Here is a profession of Religion indeed, that cannot have so much mastery of the corrupt heart, as to deny and overcome it selfe in things that are grossely ill. How will a man part with his bloud and life, that will not part with things that he should part withall, not onely with something to the poore, and to good uses, but to part with some sinfull course of life and wicked and ungodly lusts that fight against the soule, who will not endure not so much as a checke, who rather then they will goe under that censure wherewith the world is pleased to disgrace Religion, they will live and die like Atheists. This extreame tendernesse in the matters of God and of salvation, is the cause why many eternally perish.

Againe, to cut off all vaine excuses, Let us oft have in thought of our heart what we shou'd be, and what we shou'd all aime at, and how far we come all short of it. A Christian that hopes of good of his Religion, should live by faith, and depend upon God in the use of lawfull meanes. If he be as he shou'd be, he ought to walke with God, keep his watch with him, and doe nothing unbecoming the eye of God. When his corruption drawes him to be carelesse, then he is not as he shou'd be ; for in a right temper he ought to be fitted to every good worke, ready for all opportunities of doing any thing that is good ; because the time of this life is the seeds-time, the time of doing good, the time of reaping is in the world

6.

To remember
what we shou'd
all be, and what
we shou'd all
aime at.

to

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1 Cor. 15.58.

to come ; when therefore the heart is shut, when any opportunity is offered of doing good, he may conclude certainly, I am cold and dull, pretend what I will, I am not as I should be. *A Christian ought to abound in the worke of the Lord,* especially having such abundance of encouragements as we have. What a world of encouragements hath a Christian ? there are none to those of Religion, from the inward content that it brings here at the houre of death, and in glory hereafter. When we are drawne to be scanty, niggardly, and base to things that are good, surely this is not as it should be, pretend what we will to the contrary, this is a fault. A Christian should at all times be fit to yeeld and to render up his soule unto God, because our life is uncertaine. When therefore we are moved by corruption to live in a state that we cannot abide to die in, because we are under the guilt of some sinne; then certainly pretend what we will, our state is so farre naught, as farre as there is unfitnessse and unwillingnesse to die. Let us have in the eye of our soule therefore, what a Christian should be, aime at it, and thinke that when we stop at a lower measure and pitch ; that (pretend what we will) all is but from carnall wit and policy, the greatest enemy that Religion hath.

We pray in the Lords Prayer, *Thy Kingdome come, thy will be done in earth as it is in Heaven,* great desires, and which should be the desires of all our hearts. But herein we play the Hypocrites, whilst we pray thus, that *the Kingdome of God*

God may come, that Christ may rule in our hearts over lusts and desires ; yet notwithstanding we pretend this and that excuse, whereby we may be led with this and that lust, we crosse our own prayers ; yet it sheweth what pitch we should aspire to, *To sanctifie the Lord in our hearts, to delight in him, and trust in him above all.* When we doe not this, we fall short of our owne prayers. And when we cannot bring our hearts to suffer, and to do what God would have us to do, but are led away with our owne wils , we are not as we should be; our wils should be conformable to Christs in all things ; it is our prayer, and therefore we should ayme at it. Now when flesh and bloud sets up a pitch of Religion, I am well enough, and yet prayes, *Hallowed be thy Name, Thy Kingdome come, Thy will be done, &c.* Such a man is an hypocrite; for his prayer leads him further and further still till he come to Heaven, where is all perfection, unwill when, our life is a life of endeavour and progresse. Though we be never so perfect, yet Christ may more rule and set up his Kingdome yet more in the heart, and further bring our will to his in all things : when flesh and bloud sets up cavils against this, we play the hypocrites with God and crosse our selves. Therefore let us justifie a measure of Religion beyond our present pitch whatsoever it is, justifie it more and more still. Thinke we are never as we should be till we be in Heaven, and never blesse our selves, but thinke that we should alwayes be on the growing hand, and whatsoever

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excuse comes to hinder us from zealousnesse and earnestnesse (though it carry a shew of reason in the profession of Religion) account it to come from our corrupt hearts.

7.

To doe all our works of Religion and our calling to God, and not to man.

Againe, Remember to doe all things to God, and not to man in our Callings, both of Religion, and in our particular Callings ; and then whatsoever discouragement there is from men, we should not be discouraged. We shall heare men continually complaine of others, that they are unthankfull persons, and why should we doe any thing for them? Why? doe it to God: If it fall within our callings, let us doe justice and shew mercy, God will accept, though men doe not: It cuts off many discouragements in duties : It is best to have Gods reward. In this world it is good to meet with naughty unthankfull persons, because else we should meet with all our reward here. It is good to doe somewhat for Gods sake, and for Religion, let people be as thankfull as they will ; to say, I did it not to you, but to God. If a man regard the discouragement of the world, he shall never doe that which is good , people in the world are so unthankfull and regardless to those that wish them best, and that doe best to them. But if a man doe a thing to God, and doe it out of duty and conscience, he may hold on, have he never so many discouragements in the world, he shall lose nothing, all shall be rewarded, and is regarded.

8.

To be perswaded that sinne is the greatest evill, and grace the greatest good in the world.

Likewise be sure to carry this in mind, That sinne is the greatest evill, and grace and goodnesse the

the best thing in the world. Therefore there is no excuse for sinne, from any thing in the world: for it is the worst thing in the world, which staines the soule, and hinders it from comfort. And for grace and goodnessse in the inward man, it is the best thing in the world, therefore purchasethis, though with disadvantage. It is best to avoid sin, though with enduring evill; yea to avoid the least sinne, by enduring the greatest evill. It is wisedome to doe good with disadvantage, when the disadvantage is bounded only in this life, the thing that I do, being a thing which furthers my reckoning at the day of account. Therefore have this alway in consideration, whatsoever I suffer in this world, I will not sinne, this will cut off a world of excuses.

Therefore let us labour to cut off all cavils, and to arme our selves. It is the ⁱⁿ *Peters exhortation*, as *Davids* worthie ^{were} through the pikes to fetch him water from ^{the} *Well of Bethlehem*: so all Christian worthies that looke to be crowned, let them be armed inwardly with resolution for good things, take up resolutions that they will doe it. As *Paul* tels his scholler *Timothy* of his purpose, *Thou knowest my purpose, and manner of living*: This is the manner of a Christian life; that this, *I will not breake for all the world*. So there is a purpose of living honestly, a manner of life, not by starts, now and then to speake a good word, and to doe a good deed. But there is a purpose and manner of life for it, he resolves always for the best things.

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Mat. 11. 12.

And to this end beg of God his Spirit, which is above all impediments. The more Spirit, the more strength and courage against impediments. The more we attend upon holy meanes, the more spirituall and heavenly light and life is set up in the soule. The more spirituall wee are, the more we shall tread under foot all those things that stand between us and Heaven. Let us therefore labour more and more for the Spirit, and then wee shall offer an holy violence unto good things ; as it was said of John Baptists time, *The Kingdome of God suffered violence*, men were so eager of it, as that they surprised it as a Castle, by violence. *There is no way to take Heaven but by offering violence to discouragement, corruption, and whatsoever stands in the way*, *The violent onely takes Heaven by force*. Now why untroure spirituall, we shall not pretend, *That meet with a Lyon in the way*, that there are difficulties, as he sluggard doth, that thinks himselfe wiser then many men who can render a reason ; but wee shall goe boldly and couragiouly on ; and know that there are more encouragements for good, and stronger, then the world hath allurements to bee naught, which are but for the present life ; but wee have inward ones, which will hold out in the houre of death and after. Therefore, goe on boldly and resolutely in good things, alwayes remembiring to beg the Spirit of God, that may arme our spirits with invincible courage.

Now

Now the Spirit of God brings *Faith* with it, which is a conquering victorious grace over the world, and *sees him* that is *invisible*; which brings *love* also, which is *strong as death*, wherewith the soule being warmed, *It constraineth us to doe duties in spight of all impediments*; the Spirit of God will strengthen our *hope* also of Heaven, which strengthens us against all discouragements which stand in our way: *For this hope is our greater and better grounds then discouragements are*; and hee that giveth us this hope, will inable us to possesse it.

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Heb. 11.27.
Cant. 8.6.

Therefore labour first, to have a cleare understanding of the things of God, and of the excellency of them, for light will cause heate. Why did the Kingdome of Heaven in John Baptists time suffer violence? why were men then so violent to cleave unto Christ? because from that time the Cospel was more clearly manifested. And heavenly truths the more they are discovered and layd open (there is such an excellency in them) the more they worke upon the heart and affections. Therefore, *The Kingdome of Heaven suffered violence*. And where are people more earnest after good things, then in these places where the Evangelicall Truths of God are layd open most, there they breake through all discouragements whatsoever.

And so, *Labour for Faith to beleewe those truths*, which is the most victorious and conquering

S E C U R I T Y . V I I I . Grace, that will carry us through all discouragements whatsoever, because it will set greater things before us, then the discouragements are. Are we afraid of men? *Faith* it sets *Hell* before us. Are we allured by the world? it sets *Heaven* before us. It conquers the world with all the discouraging temptations thereof. Are the discouragements from impossibilities? O, It is hard, I cannot doe it. I but (saith *Paul*) *I am able to doe all things through Christ that strengthens me.* There is a kinde of omnipotency in faith, *O woman be it unto thee as thou wilt.* We have abundance of strength in Christ, *Faith* is but an emp' y hand that goes to Christ to draw from him what it hath need of; *In Christ I can doe all things.*

Phil. 4.13.

Mat. 15.

2 Cor. 5.14.

Cant. 8.

So, *To have our hearts warmed with love to him*; this Grace of the Spิตit will make us passe through all discouragements; for it hath a constraining power; *The love of Christ constraines us* (saith the Apostle) If our hearts once be warmed with the love of Christ, this will make us to thinke nothing too deare for Christ, and will cut off all excuses and pretences whatsoever, which come from coldnesse of affecti-on. *Love is strong as death*, as we have it in this Booke, *Much water cannot quench it.* All oppositions and discouragements whatsoever, all the water which the Devill and the world hath or useth, cannot quench the heavenly fire of love, when it is kindled in any measure. *What carried the blessed Saints and Martyrs of God in*

in all times through the pikes of all discouragements ? The Spirit of God, by the Spirit of love , from a Spirit of Faith, and heavenly conviction of the excellency and truth of the things : they saw such a light which wrought upon their affections , and carried them a-maine against the stremme (contrary to the stremme of the times wherein they lived) that the worse the times were, the better they were.

And let us consider againe, *That Christ will not be alwayes thus alluring us*, that wee shall not alwayes have these encouragements, such truths and motions of Gods Spirit, as perhaps we feele now. Therefore when we feele any good motion stirred up toward Christ, enter-taine it presently, haply we shall never heare of it againe, the longer we deferre and put it off, the worse. As a man that is rowing in a boat, let him neglect his stroake, the neglecting of one may make him tug at it five or six times after to overtake those that are before him. So nothing is gotten by sloath and negligence, wee doe but cast our selvs backe the more.

And let us helpe our selves with setting the Glory to come before our eyes , with *Moses* to have a *Patriarks* eye to him *that is invisible*, to see a *Countrye afarre off*. Now, we are nearer salvation, then when we beleaved, let us help our backward soules this way ; that so, having still Glory in our eyes, it may help us to goethrough

9.
The shortnesse
of enjoying
these helps.

10.
By setting the
glory to come
before us.
Heb. 11.

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Psal.37.

1 Cor.15.58.

all discouragements whatsoever they be. We know *Zaccheus*, when he was afraid that hee should not see Christ, went before the multitude, and getting up upon the top of a Tree, thus helps himselfe : So doth Grace helpe it selfe by Glory. And so farre is Grace from objecting and pretending lets, as it makes supplies in Gods service ; as *David*, who in this case was pleased to be accounted vile. Let us looke unto the Recompence of the reward, not to the present discouragements, but to the prize at the end of the race. What makes a souldier to fight hard for the victory in the end ? The sweetnesse of the triumph. What makes a Husbandman goe through all discouragements ? he hopes to receive a crop in the end. Consider the issue which followeth after a conscientable, carefull, and Christian life, after a more neare and perfect walking with God, maintaining Communion with him. Let there be what discouragements there will be in the world, *The end thereof is peace, The end of that man is peace.* Upon this ground, the Apostle exhorts us, *to be fruitfull, and abundant in the worke of the Lord; knowing that your labour is not in vaine in the Lord.*

THE



The ninth Sermon.

CANT. V. VI.

I rose to open to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himself, &c.



Naturally we are prone to delaies in heavenly things, and then to cover all with excutes. A man is a Sophister to himselfe, whom he first deceives, before the Devill, or the World deceive him ; Which is the reason why so oft in Scripture you have this mentioned. *Be not deceived, God is not mocked : Be not deceived, neither Adulterer, nor Covetous person, nor such and such, shall ever enter into the Kingdome of Heaven.* *Be not deceived.* Which is an intimation, that naturally we are very prone to be deceived in points of the greatest consequence in the world, to flatter our selves (as the Church doth here) with false excutes, *I have put off my coat, &c.* But we shall now see in this next verse, what becomes of all those excuses, and backwardnesse of the Church, whereby shee puts off Christ.

Gal. 6. 7.

1 Cor. 6 9, 19.

My

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Ver.4.

Ver.5.

Ver.6.

*My Beloved put in his hand by the hole of the doore,
and my bowels were moved for him.*

*I rose to open to my Beloved, and my hands drop-
ped with myrrh, and my fingers with sweet smelling
myrrh upon the handles of the locke.*

*I rose to open to my Beloved, but my Beloved had
withdrawne himselfe, &c.*

This comes of her sluggishnesse, and drowsi-
nesse, that Christ absented and withdrew him-
selfe. There are three things here set downe in
these verses now read:

1. *Christ's withdrawing of himselfe.*

2. *His gratiouse dealing having withdrawn him-
selfe.*

He doth not altogether leave his Church, but
puts his finger into the hole of the doore, and then
leaves some sweetnesse behind him before he
goes. After which is set downe,

3. *The successe of Christ's departure, and with-
drawing of himselfe from her.*

1. *Her bowels were moved in her, which were
hard before.*

2. *She rose up out of her bed, wherein former-
ly she had framed, and composed her selfe to
rest.*

3. *She seeks, and calls after him.*

But the Doctrinall points, which are to be ob-
served out of these verses, are these:

1. *That Christ doth sometimes use to leave his
children, as he did the Church here.*

2. *That the cause is from the Church her selfe, as
we see how unkindly she had used Christ, to let
him*

Observ. 1.

Observ. 2.

him attend our leisure so long ; therefore he taking a holy state upon him, leaves the Church. The cause of his forsaking us, is in our selves, we may thanke our selves for it.

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3. That though Christ deale thus with us, yet notwithstanding, he never leaves us wholly, without some foot steps of his saving grace, and everlasting love, some remainders and prints he leaves upon the soule : So as it lingers after him, and never resttill it find him, he alwayes leaves something. There is never a totall desertion ; as we see here in Christ's dealing, he puts his finger into the hole of the doore, he stands at the doore, and leaves myrrh behind him, something in the heart that causeth a lingering, and restlesse affection in her towards Christ.

Observ. 3.

4. That the Church by reason of this gracious dealing of Christ (leaving somewhat behind him) is sensible of her former unkindnesse, is restlesse and stirs up her selfe to endeavour more and more, till she have recovered her former communion, and sweet fellowship with Christ, which she had before. She never gives over till Christ and shee meet againe in peace (as we shall see in the prosecution) These be the chiefe points considerable :

Observ. 4.

First, Christ doth use sometimes to leave his Church, as here he doth, My Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, &c.

Observ. 1.

But what kind of leaving is it ?

Wee must distinguish of Christ's leavings, and withdrawings of himselfe : They are either

in

in regard of outward or inward comforts and helps.

1. Outward, as Christ leaves his Church sometimes, by taking away the meanes of Salvation, the Ministry, or by taking away outward comforts, which is a withdrawing of his, especially if he accompany the taking of them away with some signes of his displeasure, or sense of his anger, as usually it fals out. This doth imbitter all crosses and losses, namely when they come from Christ, as a Testimony of his anger for our former unkindnesse.

2. Sometimes his forsaking is more inward, and that is double ; Either in regard of peace, and joy, sweet inward comfort that the soule had wont to feele in the holy Ordinances by the Spirit of Christ ; or in regard of strength and assistance. There is desertion in regard of Comfort, and in regard of strength. Sometimes he leaves them to themselves in regard of strength and supportation to fall into some sin, to cure some greater sin perhaps.

Now that Christ thus leaves his Church, it is true of all, both of the body and of each particular member of the Church.

It is true of the whole body of the Church ; for you have the Church complaining, Isa. 49. 14. God hath forgotten me. Can a Mother forget her childe ? (saith God againe) So Psal. 44. 9. and in other places, the Church complaines of forsakings. The Scripture is full of complaints in this kind.

I.
In the whole
Body.

Job 7.2.

Jonah 2.4,5.

I.

To indeare for-
mer slighted
presence.

Numb. 11.5.

It is true of the severall members, and especially of the most eminent members, as we see holy Job complaines, as if God had set him (as it were) a but to shoot at, and had opposed himselfe against him. So David complaines (Psal. 88.11. Psal. 77.9. and Psal. 60.1. and in other Psalmes) of Gods anger. *Correct me not in thine anger.* The Psalmes are full of this, so as it would be time unprofitably spent to be large in a point so cleare, that every one knoweth well enough, who reads and understandes the Psalmes. So Jonah likewise felt a kind of forsaking, when he was in the midst of the sea, when the waves were without, and terrors within, when he was in the midst of Hell (as it were) Thus you see the instances cleare the point.

The ends that God hath in it are many, First, *To indeare his presence the more to us,* which we slighted too much before. It is our corruption, the not valuing of things till they be gone, we set not the true price upon them when we enjoy them. When we enjoy good things, we looke at the grievances which are mingled with the good, and forget the good, which when it is gone then wee remember the good. The Israelites could remember their onions and garlicke, and forget their slavery : So because Manna was present, they despised Manna and that upon one inconvenience it had, *It was ordinary with them.* Thus the corrupt heart of man is prone in the enjoying of favours : If it have any grievance, it murmures at that, and it troubles and makes them

SER. IX.

them forget all the goodnesse and sweetnesse of what they enjoy. But on the contrary, when God withdrawes those good things from us, then we forget those former inconveniences, and begin to thinke what good we had by them. This is the poyson and corruption of our Nature.

2.

To try the truith
of our graces
and affections.

Again, Christ seems to forsake us, to try the truth of the graces and affections in us, whether they be true or not, and to cause us to make after him, when he seems to forsake us, as undoubtedly we shall, where there is truth of grace planted in the heart in any measure.

3.

To teach us
wisdome how
to deale with
others.

2 Cor. 1.4.

And In regard of others, he doth it to teach us heavenly wisdome how to deale with those in affliction: It makes us wise, tender, and successfull in dealing with others, when we have felt the like particular grievance our selves; as Gal. 6.1. Brethren if a man be overtaken in a fault, you that are spirituall restore such an one in the spirit of meeknesse, considering thy selfe, least thou also be tempted. Experience of spirituall grieve in this kind, will make us fit, able and wise every way to deale with others.

4.

To weane us
from the world.

This serves likewise, To weane us from the world, in the plenty and abundance of all earthly things: For take a Christian that hath no crosse in the world, let him finde some estrangement of Christ from his spirit, that he finds not the comforts of the Holy-Ghost, and that inlargement which in former times he enjoyed, and all the wealth he hath, the earthly contentments he enjoys

joyes please him not, nor can content that soule, which hath ever felt sweet communion with Christ. Again, how should we pray with earnestnesse of affection, *Thy Kingdome come* (in the time of prosperity) except there were somewhat in this kind to raise up the soule to desire to be gone? Now it is our subjection to these alterations and changes, ebbings and flowings, sometimes to have the sence of Gods love in Christ, and sometimes to want it, sometimes to feele his love, and somtimes againe the fruits of his anger and displeasure, which serves exceedingly to stir up mens desires of Heaven.

5. In this place here, the especiall end was, *To correct the security, and ill carriage of the Church.*

And likewise, *To prepare the Church by this desertion, and seeming forsaking for nearer communion:* For indeed Christ did not forsake her, but to her feeling, to bring her in the sequell to have nearer communion and union with himself then ever she had before; God forsakes, that he may not forsake; he seemes strange, that he may be more friendly: This is Christs usage, he personates an adversary, when he intends to shew the greatest effects of his love, as we may see afterwards in the passages following.

And also, *To make us to know throughly the biterneſſe of ſin,* that we may grow to a further hatred of that which deprives us of so ſweet a communion: We think ſin a trifle, and never know it enough, till the time of temptation, that conscience

5.
To correct our security.

6.
To prepare the soule for a nearer communion with him.

7.
That we may know throughly what the biterneſſe of ſin is

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8.

*That wee may
taste a litt'le
what Christ
suffered.*

ence be awakened and opened, that it appeares in its right colours.

And then again, *That we may know what Christ suffered, and underwent for us in the sence of Gods wrath, in the absence of his favour for a time.* This the humane Nature could never have suffered, if his divinity had withdrawne it selfe. Now all of us must sip of that cup whereof Christ drank the dregs, having a tast what it is to have God to forsake us. For the most part, those beleevers who live any time (especially those of great parts) God deales thus with, weaker Christians he is more indulgent unto ; at such times we know of what use a Mediatour is, and how miserable our condition were without such an one, both to have borne and overcome the wrath of God for us, which burden he could never have undergone it, but had sunke under it, but for the *Hypostaticall union.*

*Use 1.
Not to censure
other Christians
wanting
comfort.*

Let us not therefore censure any Christian, when we find that their course hath been good and gracious ; yet notwithstanding they seeme to want comfort, let us not wonder at them, as if God had utterly forsaken them : Indeed sometimes they thinke themselves forsaken, and the world thinkes them so too, *that God regards them not:* They are people of no respect either to God or to others, as you have the Church in the Psalmes complaining, as if God had forsaken them, so they thinke themselves forsaken, and the world thinks them so too, and neglects them ; therefore in so doing we shall censure the gene-

generation of the Righteous. It was thus with the Head of the Church, with the whole Church, and with every particular member; neither is it fit wee should alwayes enjoy the sence of Gods love. Christ by heavenly wisedome dispenseth of his sweetnesse, comforts and peace, as may stand with our soules best good; and we shoulde as much take heed of censuring our selves in that condition, as if we were rejected and cast away of God. We must judge our selves at such times by Faith, and not by feeling; looking to the promises and Word of God, and not to our present sence and apprehension.

Againe if this be so, Learne to prepare and look for it before hand, and to get some grounds of comfort, some promises out of the word, and to keep a good conscience. O it is a heavy thing, when God shall seeme to be angry with us, and our conscience at the same time shall accuse us, when the devill shall lay sins hard to our charge, and some affliction at the same time lie heavy upon the sore and guilty soule. If we have not somewhat layed up before hand, what will become of the poore soule, when Heaven, and Earth, and Hell, and all shall seeme to be against it. There are few that come to Heaven, but they know what these things meane. It is good therefore to looke for them, and to prepare some comforts before hand.

But what here should be the inward moving cause? It is in the Church her selfe; for marke

*Use 2.
To prepare and
looke for de-
serton.*

SER. IX.

Obser. 2.

Causes of de-
sertion in our
selves.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

the coherence, she had turned off Christ with excuses, pretences, and delatory answers, and now presently upon it Christ forsakes her in regard of her feeling, and of the sweet comfort she formerly enjoyed. The point is,

That the cause rests in our selves why Christ withdrawes comfort from our soules.

If we search our owne hearts we shall find it so ; and usually the causes in our selves are these, as it was in the Church here. 1. When we are unkind to Christ, and repell the sweet motions of the Spirit. 2. When we improve not the precious means of salvation that we enjoy. 3. When we are careless of our conversation and company. 4. When we linger after carnall liberties and ease. 5. When we yeeld to carnall policy, and shifts to keep us off from the power of Religion, to goe on in a lukewarne course. 6. When we linger after earthly things and comforts, and wrap our selves up in fleshly policy for ease. 7. When we tremble not at Gods judgments, and threatenings, and at the signes of them, with many such things. Where these dispositions are, wee need not wonder if wee find not the comforts of Christ, and of the Holy-Ghost in us, with the gracious presence of his Spirit ; the cause is in our selves. But security hath been at large spoken of before, where the Churches sleep was handled ; therefore the point shall not be here inlarged, but only some use made of it, as may serve for the present purpose.

Vse 1.

If Christ should take away the comforts that we

we enjoy, and remove himselfe, and his dwelling from us (for he is now yet among us, and knocks at our doores) doe we not give him just cause to depart ? what a spirit of slumber possessteth us, which will be awaked with nothing to seeke after Christ ? how few lay hold upon God, presse upon him , wrestle with him by prayer , to hide themselves before the evill day come, as they should doe ? Therefore if Christ have absented himselfe a long time from the Church in generall, and withdrawne the comfort and presence of his ordinances ; and in particular withheld the sweet comforts of our spirits, and our peace, so that we see him in the contrary signes of his displeasure and anger, as if he did not regard and respect us, we have given him just cause so to doe. Wee see here how the Church used Christ, and so doe we with the like security, and a spirit of slumber, with unkindnesse, notwithstanding all the provocations that Christ useth to win us ; he leaves us not, untill he be left first, for he desires to have nearer acquaintance, communion and fellowship with the soul; as we have seene in the former verse, *My Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled, Open to me, &c.* Therefore if we doe not enjoy more acquaintance with Christ then we doe, and walke more in the comforts of the Holy-Ghost , it is meerly from our our owne indisposition and security ; therefore let us censure our selves in this kind, and not call Christ an enemy, as if he had forgotten, and God had forsaken. Take heed of such a spirit of muring :

Act. 9 39.

The best way to
recover spiritu-
al comfort.

SER. IX.

Observe. 3.

muring : If such a state befall us, let us labour to lay our hand upon our mouth, and to justifie Christ. It is just with thee thus to leave me, to give me over to this terror, to deale thus with me, that have dealt so unkindly with thee ; so to justifie God, and accuse our selves, is the best way to recover spirituall comfort.

Well, for the third point, *That howsoever Christ bee provoked by the Churches ingratitude, drowsinesse, and careleſſe carriage, to leave her in regard of her feeling, and of inward comfort. Yet notwithstanding he is so gracious, as to leave something behind him, that shewes indeed, that he had not left the Church altogether, but onely in some regard.* For howsoever Christ (in regard of some order of his providence) leave it ; yet in regard of another order of his providence, care and mercy, he doth not leave it, so as one way which hee takes must sometimes give place to another way of his working in ordering things. Sometimes he is present in a way of comfort, that is one order of his dispensation ; and when he sees that that is neglected, then he withdrawes his comforts, and hides his gracious countenāce; yet he is then present still in another order and way, though wee discerne it not, that is, in a way of humbling the soule, letting it see its sinne : So here, howsoever Christ had withdrawn himselfe in regard of this manner of his dealing, in respect of comfort, that the Church did not now see his grace, favour, yet he left behind him a Spirit of grace, to affect her heart with grieve, sorrow, and shame, and to

stir

stir up her endeavours to seeke after him (as it is said here) *I rose to open to my Beloved, and my hands dropt myrrh, and my fingers sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the locks.*

Here observe these three things, which shall be briefly named, because they shall be touched elsewhere.

Christ's grace is the cause of our grace.

He first leaves myrrh, and then her fingers drop myrrh ; our oyle is from his oyle ; the head being anointed, the oyle ranne downe to the skirts of Aarons garment ; Out of his fulnesse we receive grace for grace ; that is, our grace is answerable to the grace of Christ ; we have all from him, favour for his favour, because he is beloved, we are beloved ; we have the grace of Sanctification from him, he was sanctified with the Spirit, therefore we are sanctified ; we have Grace of priviledge for his Grace, he is the Sonne of God , therefore we are Sonnes ; Hee is the heire of Heaven, therefore we are heires ; so that of his grace it is wee receive all, whether we take grace for favour, or for the grace of Sanctification, or the grace of Priviledge and Prerogative, all our graces are from his, *our myrrh from his myrrh.*

This should teach us, the necessity of dependence upon Christ, for whatsoever we have or would have ; which dependance upon Christ is the life of our life, the soule of our soules.

Againe observe from hence, that the Churches fingers dropped myrrh when she opened

Observ.

Psal. 133.2.
& 36.9.
Ioh. 1.16.

SER. IX.

Observe.

1 Chr. 28. 20.

Mat. 25. 29.

the doore, and stirred up her selfe to endeavour. When first her bowels were moved, then she makes to the doore, and then her hands dropped myrrh, so that,

We finde experience of the grace of Christ, especially when we stir up our selves to endeavour. Arise and be doing, and the Lord shall be with thee (saith David to Solomon) so let us rouze up our selves to endeavour, and we shall find a gracious presence of Christ, and a blessed assistance of the Spirit of Christ, who wil shew himself in the midst of endeavours, To him that hath shall be given : what is that? To him that hath (if he exercise and stir up the grace of God in him) shal be given. Therfore let us stirre up the graces of God in us, let us fall upon actions of obedience, second them with prayer ; whatsoever we pray for and desire, set upon the practise thereof ; we mocke God else, except we endeavour for that we desire. There was myrrh left on the doore, but she feeles it not till she arose, opened the doore, and layed her hand upon the locke.

I speak to any Christians experience, if in the midst of obedience they doe not find that comfort they looked for, and that it is meat and drink to doe Gods will ; therefore keep not off and say, I am dead and drowsie, therefore I shall be still so : You are deceived, fall upon obedience and practising of holy duties, and in the midst thereof thou shalt find the presence and assistance of Gods Spirit, that will comfort thee.

The

The third thing observable from hence is this,
That Gods Graces are sweet.

Pleasant and sweet, compared here to myrrh, which was an ingredient in the *holy oyle*. Grace makes us sweet, prayers are sweet, as it is, *Rev. 8.*

4. Christ mingleth them with his owne sweet odours, and so takes and offers them to God. Holy Obedience is sweet and delightfull to God and to the conscience, it brings peace and delight to others, therefore they are called fruits; fruit doth not onely imply and shew the issuing of good things from the root, but there is also a pleasantnesse in it: so there is a delightfulness in good works, as there is in fruit to the tast; therefore if wee would be sweet and delightfull to God, let us labour to have grace. If wee would thinke of our selves with contentment, and have inward sweetnesse, Let us labour for the graces of Gods Spirit, these are like *myrrh*. *The wicked are an abomination unto the Lord*, who abhorres them, and whatsoever is in them: But, *the righteous and sincere man is his delight*. Therefore if we would approve our selves to God, and feele that he hath delight in us, labour to be such as he may delight in.

Prov. 15. 8.

Wherefore let the discouraged soule make this use of it; not to be afraid to doe that which is good upon feare we should sinne. Indeed sinne will cleave to that we doe, but Christ will pardon the sinne, and accept that which is sweet of his owne Spirit. Let us not esteeme basely of that which Christ esteemes highly of; nor

Use.

SER. IX.

let that be vile in our eyes that is precious in his ; let us labour to bring our hearts to comfortable obedience , for it is a sweet sacrifice to God.

Now whence came all this ? from this that is mentioned, ver. 4. *My Belovēd put in his hand by the hole of the doore, and my bowels were moved for him.* First for that expression, he put his finger in by the hole of the doore. It implies here, that Christ before he departed left by his Spirit an impression on the Churches heart, which deeply affected her to seeke after him.

Exod. 8.19.

1 Cor. 3.7.

The Fingers spoken of, are nothing but the power of his Spirit, as the usuall Scripture phrase is, *This is Gods finger, Gods mighty hand,* without which all ordinances are ineffectuall. Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but all is nothing without the working of the Spirit : The motions whereof are most strong, being Gods finger, whereby he wrought all that affection in the Church, which is here expressed. Christ before he leaveth the Church, puts his finger into the hole of the doore ; that is, he works somewhat in the soule by his Spirit, which stirred up a constant endeavour to seeke after him. For why else followes it *her bowels were moved after him,* which implies a worke of the Spirit upon her bowels, exprest in her grieve for his absence, and shame for her refusing his entrance, and whereby her heart was moved, and turned in her to seeke after him. From whence thus explained, observe,

That

That outward meanes will doe no good, unlesse the finger of Christ come to doe all that is good.

The finger of Christ is the Spirit of Christ, that is, a kinde of Divine power goes from him in hearing and speaking the word of God, and in prayer, there is more then a mans power in all these; if these work any effect, *Christ must put his finger in*; when duties are untolded to us in the Ministry of the word, all is to no purpose, but the sounding of a voice, unlesse the finger of Christ open the heart, and worke in the soule.

Let us make this use of it therefore, not to rest in any meanes whatsoever, but desire the presence of Christs finger to move, and to work upon our hearts and soules. Many carelesse Christians goe about the ordinances of God, and never regard this power of Christ, this mighty power, *the finger of Christ*. Thereupon they finde nothing at all that is divine & spirituall wrought in them: For as it required a God to redeeme us, to take our nature, wherein he might restore us: so likewise it requires the power of God to alter our natures. We could not be brought into the state of grace without Divine satisfaction; and we cannot be altered to a frame of grace without a Divine finger, the finger of God working upon our hearts and soules. This should move us in all the ordinances of God that wee attend upon, to lift up our hearts in the midst of them. Lord, let me feele the finger of thy Spirit writing thy word upon my heart. Turne us O Lord, and we shall be turned. Pray for this quick-

Vſe I.

SER. IX.

quickning and ialivening ; for this strengthening Spirit all comes by it. 2. From this that it is said here, *That Christ puts his finger into the hole of the doore before he removed it, and withdrew himselfe.* Observe,

Observ. 2.

How graciously Christ doth deale with us, *That he doth always leave some grace, before he doth offer to depart ?* Let us therefore for the time to come, lay, and store this up as a ground of comfort, that however Christ may leave us, yet notwithstanding he will never leave us wholly, but as he gave us his holy Spirit at first, so he wil continue him in us by some gracious work or other, either by way of *comfort*, or of *strength* to uphold us. Perhaps we may need more sorrow, more humility then of any other grace : For Winter is as good for the growing of things as the Spring ; because were it not for this, where would be the killing of weeds and wormes, and preparing of the ground, and land for the Spring : So it is as needfull for Christians to find the presence of Christ, in the way of *humiliation* and *abasement*, causing us to afflict our owne soules, as to feele his presence in *Peace, Joy, and Comfort*. In this life we cannot be without this gracious dispensation. We may therefore comfort our selves, that howsoever Christ leaves us, yet he will always leave somewhat behind him , as here he left some *myrrh* after him upon the handle of the doore ; some *myrrh* is left alwayes behind him upon the soul, which keeps it in a state and frame of grace, and sweetens it. *Myrrh* was one of the ingredients

ents in the *holy oyle*, as it is, *Exod. 30.30.* and so this leaving of *myrrh* behind him, signifies the oyle of grace left upon the soule, that inabled the Church to doe all these things, which are after spoken of.

But you will say, How doth this appeare, when in some desertion a Christian finds no grace, strength, or comfort at all? that nothing is left?

It is answered, *they alwayes doe.* Take those who at any time have had experience of the love of God, and of Christ formerly, take them at the worst, you shall find from them some sparkles of grace, broken speeches of tryed secret comfort, some inward strength and strugling against corruptions, their spirits endeavouring to recover themselves from sinking too low, and with something notwithstanding both despaire and corruption. Take a Christian at the worst, there will be a discovery of the Spirit of Christ left in him, notwithstanding all desertion. This is universally in all in some measure, though perhaps it is not discerned by a Christian himselfe, but by those that are able to judge. Sometimes others can read our evidences better then our selves. A Christian that is in temptation cannot judge of his owne estate, but others can; and so at the very worst, he hath alwayes somewhat left in him, whereby he may bee comforted, Christ never leaves his Church and Children that are his wholly. Those that are wholly left, they never had saving grace, as *Achitophel, Cain, Saul, and Judas* were left

Object.

Answe.

SER. IX.

Ioh. 13. 1.

Use 2.

left to themselves; but for the Children of God, if ever they found the power of sanctifying grace, *Christ whom he loves, he loves to the end;* From whom he departs not, unlesse he leaves somewhat behind him, that sets an edge upon the desires to seeke after him.

Make this second use of it, To magnifie the gracious love and mercy of Christ, That when we deserve the contrary to be left altogether, yet notwithstanding so graciously he deales with us.

Behold in this his dealing the mercy of Christ, he will not suffer the Church to be in a state of security, but will rather (to cure her) bring her to another opposite state of griefe and sorrow, as we shall see in the next point, how that which Christ left in the heart of the Church, so afflicted her, *That her bowels were turned in her.* Wherupon she riseth, seekes, and enquires after Christ by the watchmen and others. So she faith of her selfe.

My bowels were moved in me, &c.

What was that? My heart was affected, full of sorrow and griefe for my unkind dealing with Christ. Hereby those affections were stirred up (that were afore sleepy and secure) to godly griefe, sorrow, and shame: For God hath planted affections in us, and joyned them with conscience, as the Executioners with the Judge: So that when as conscience accuseth of any sinne, either of Omission or Commission, affections are ready to be the executioners within us. Thus to prevent eternall damnation, God hath set up a Throne in

in our own hearts to take revenge and correction by our owne affections, godly sorrow and mourning; as here the Church saith, *My bowels were turned in me.* It was a shame and grieve, springing out of love to Christ that hath been so kind, patient and full of forbearance to her. *My bowels were turned in me,* that is, sorrow and grieve were upon me for my unkind dealing.

The observation from hence is,

That security, and a cold dull state, produceth a contrary temper; that is, those that are cold, dull, secure, and put off Christ, he suffers them to fall into sharp sorrowes and griefes.

Observ.

We usually say, cold diseases must have hot and sharp remedies : It is most true spiritually, security, which is a kind of lethargy (a cold disease) forgetting of God, and our duty to him, must have a hot and sharp cure ; and the lethargy is best cured by a burning ague. So Christ deales here, he puts his finger in at the hole of the doore, and leaves grace behind to work upon the bowels of the Church, to make her grieve and be ashamed for her unkind dealing. Thus he cures security by sorrow. This is the best conclusion of sin.

And we may observe withall, That even *sins of Omission* they bring grieve, shame, and sorrow ; And in the issue through Christs sanctifying them, these which they breed, consume the *Paren-* ; that is, *sinne* brings forth sorrow, shame, and grieve, which are a meanes to secure *sinne*. Security breeds this moving of the bowels ; which moving

Observ.

ving helps security. Would we therefore prevent sorrow, shame, and griefe : Take heed then of security the cause that leads to them; yea of sinnes of *Omission*, wherein there is more danger then in sinnes of *Commission*. The sinnes of carnall wicked men are usually sinnes of *Commission*, most which breake out outrageously , and thereby taint themselves with open sins. But the sinnes of Gods people(who are nearer to him)are for the most part sinnes of *Omission*, that is,negligence, coldnesse, carelesnesse in duty, want of zeale, and of care they should have in stirring up the graces of God in them, as the Church here, which did not give way to Christ,nor shooke off security.

Use.

Let us esteem as sleightly as we will of sinnes of *Omission*, and carelesnesse, they are enough to bring men to hell, if God be not the more mercifull. It is not required onely that we doe no harme, and keep our selves from outward evils ; but we must doe good in a good manner, and have a care to be fruitfull and watchfull,which if we doe not, this temper will bring griefe,shame, and sorrow afterwards : As here even for sinnes of *Omission*, deadnesse, and dulnesse, we see the Church is left by Christ, and her bowels are turned in her : For carelesse neglect, and omission of duty to God, is a presage, and forerunner of some downefall and dejection. And commonly it is true,when a man is in a secure and carelesse estate, a man may read his destiny(though he have been never so good) nay the rather, if he be good.

Such

Such a one is in danger to fall into some sharp punishment, or into some sin ; for of all states and tempers, God will not suffer a Christian to be in a secure, lazie, dead state, when he cannot performe things comfortably to God, or himselfe, or to others ; a dead secure estate is so hatefull to him (decay in our first love, this lukewarme temper) that he will not endure it, it either goes before some great sinne, crosse, affliction, or judgement.

My bowels were moved in me.

And good reason, it was a sutable correction to the sinne wherein she offended : For Christ his bowels were turned towards her in love and pitty, *My love, my dove, my undefited*, in which case she neglecting him, it was fit shée should find *moving of bowels* in another fence (out of love too) but in shame and mourning. Christ here leaves her to seeke after him, that had waited and attended her leisure before, as we shall see after.

The next thing we may hence observe in that, *That her bowels were turned in her from something left in the hole of the doore by the Spirit of Christ, is,*

That Christ hath our affections in his government.

He hath our bowels in his rule and government, more then we our selves have. We cannot of our selves rule our grieve, shame, sorrow, or such affections as these. The wisest man in the world cannot award grieve, and sorrow, when

God

Obseru.

SER. IX.

Prov. 21.1.

2 Sam. 17.23.

Gen. 4.

Mat. 27.3,4.

Use.

God will turne it upon his bowels, and make a man ashamed and confounded in himselfe. All the wit and policy in the world cannot suppress those affections ; for Christ rules our hearts. *The hearts of Kings are in his hand, as the rivers of water,* as well as the hearts of ordinary persons.

If he set any thing upon the soule to afflict it and cast it downe, it shall afflict it, if it be but a conceit, if he will take away the reines from the soule, and leave it to its owne passion, removing away its guard ; for he by his Spirit guards our soules with peace, by commanding of tranquillity : So as let him but leave it to its selfe, and it will teare it selfe in sunder ; as Achitophel, who being left to himselfe, did teare himselfe in pieces; Cain also being thus lef特, was disquieted, tormented, and wracked himselfe. So Judas in this case being divided in himselfe, you see what became of him; Let Christ but leave us to our own passion of sorrow, what will become of us but misery? He hath more rule therefore of our passions then we our selves have, because we cannot rule them graciously, nor can we stay them when we would.

Therefore this should strike an awe in us of God, with a care to please him : For there is not the wisest man in the world, but if he removeth his guard from his soule, and leave him to himselfe : If there were no Devill in hell, yet he would make him his owne tormenter and executioner ; therefore the Apostle makes this sweet promise, *Phil. 4.7.* He bids them pray to God ; *And the peace*

peace of God which passeth all understanding should [guard] their soules, &c. So the word is in the originall. It is a great matter for the keeping of Gods people, to have their soules guarded.

Her bowels were turned in her.

Here againe, as the conclusion of all this, we seeing this estate of the Church, may wonder at Christs carriage towards her in this world. Christ is wonderfull in his Saints, and in his *goodnesse* towards them; sometimes alluring them, as wee see Christ the Church here; wondrous in *patience*, notwithstanding their provocation of him; wondrous in his *desertions*; wondrous in leaving something behind him in *desertions*. Those that are his, hee will not leave them without grace, whereby they shall seeke him againe. Nay, the falling out of lovers shall be the renewing of fresh and new love, more constant then ever the former was. Thus our blessed Saviour goes beyond us in our deserts, taking advantage (even) of our security (for our greater good) making all worke to good in the issue, which shall end in a more neare and close communion between Christ and his Church, then ever before. Carnall men feele not these changes, ebbings and flowings; they are not acquainted with Gods forsakings. Indeed their whole life is nothing but a forsaking of God, and Gods forsaking of them, who gives them outward comforts, peace and friends in the world, where-

¹ Thes 3.

Rom. 8.28.

SER. IX.

Psal. 35.19.

in they solace themselves ; but for inward communion with him , any strength to holy duties, or against sinne , for to be instruments for Gods honour and service, to doe any good, they are carelesse : For they live hereto serve their owne turnes, leaving their state and inheritance behind them. The Scripture saith, *They have no changes, therefore they feare not God,* and so they goe downe to Hell quietly and securely. O but it is otherwise with Gods Children , they are tossed up and downe, God will not suffer them to prosper, or live long in a secure, drowsie, sinfull state, the continuance wherein is a fearefull evidence, that such an one as yet hath no saving grace, nor that he yet belongs to God, seeing Christ hates such an estate , and will not suffer his to be long therein , but will shift and remove them from vessell to vessell, from condition to condition, till hee have wrought in them that disposition of soule, that they shall regard, and love him more and more , and have nearer and nearer communion with him.

THE



The tenth Sermon.

CANT. V. VI.

I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone ; my soule failed when he spake, I sought him but could not find him, I called him, but he gave no answer.

Hus we see that the life of a Christian is trouble upon trouble , as wave upon wave. God will not suffer us to rest in security, but one way or other he will fire us out of our starting holes, and make us to run after him ; how much better were it for us then to doe our works cheerfully and joyfully, so to run as we may obtaine, then to be thus hurried up and downe, and through our owne default comming into desertions, and there receiving rebukes and blowes, and delayes ere we have peace againe, as it fell out with the Church in the sequell, for this Text is but the beginning of her seeming misery. The watchmen after this, found her, and wounded her, &c. But Heaven is more worth then all, now that her affections are set on fire, from thence she bestirs her selfe, is resolute to find out her beloved,

SER.X.

whom she highly values above all this world, How her affections were stirred by Christ's putting in his finger at the hole of the doore we have heard. Now followes her action thereupon, for here is rising, opening, seeking, calling and enquiring after Christ.

Action followes affection. After her bowels are moved, she ariseth and openeth, from whence we may further observe,

Observ.

That where truth of affection is, it will discover it selfe in the outward man, one way or other. If there be any affection of love and piety to God, there will be eyes lift up, knees bended downe, and hands stretched forth to Heaven. If there be any griefe for sinne, there will be the face dejected, the eyes looking downe, some expression or other: If there be a desire, there will be a making forth to the thing desired: for the outward man is commanded by the inward, which hath a kind of soveraigne commanding power over it, and sayes, doe this and it doth it, speake this and it speaks it; therefore those whose courses of life are not gracious, their affections and their hearts are not good; for where the affections are good, the actions will be suitable. *Her bowels were moved in her*, and presently she shewes the truth of her affection, in that shee maketh after him.

1. *Her soule failed when he spake.*

2. *She makes after him.*

My soule failed when he spake, I sought him but I could not find him.

Of

Of Christ's withdrawing himselfe we speake in generall before, wherfore we will leave that and proceed.

My soule failed when he spake.

That is, her soule failed when she remembred what he had spoke, when he stood at the doore, and said, *Open to me my Sister, my Love, my Dove, my Vndefiled, for my head is wet with the dew, &c.* Now when Gods Spirit had wrought upon her, then she remembred what Christ had said : All those sweet allurements were effectuall now unto her, especially when she saw that after those sweet allurements Christ had withdrawne himselfe, for that is the meaning of these words (*My soule failed when he spake unto me*) Hee did not speake now ; but her soule failed after he spake ; for so it should be read, that is, after she remembred his speech to her ; for now when she opened he was not there, therefore he could not speak to her.

The word of Christ howsoever for the present it be not effectuall, yet afterwards it will be in the remembrance of it.

Observ.

To those that are gracious, it will be effectuall when the Holy-Ghost comes to seale it further upon their heart : Christ spake many things to his Disciples which they forgot ; but when afterwards the *Holy Ghost the Comforter* was come, his office was, *to bring all things to their remembrance that they had forgotten before.* The Holy-Ghost taught them not new things, but brought former things to their remembrance ; for God

Ioh.14 26.

S.B.R.X.

will make the word effectuall at one time or other, perhaps the word we heare is not effectuall for the present, it may afterwards, many yeares after, when God awakes our consciences.

And as this is true of Gods Children, the seed now sowne in them perhaps will not grow up till many yeares after: so it is true also of those that are not Gods Children, they think they shal never heare againe of those things they heare, perhaps they will take order by sensuality, hardening of their hearts (and through Gods judgements withall concurring) that conscience shall not awake in this world, but it shall awake one day; for it is put into the heart to take Gods part, and to witnesse against us for our finnes. It shall have and performe its office hereafter, use it as you will now, and it will preach over those things again that you now heare. You shall heare againe of them, but it shall be a barren hearing. Now we may heare fruitfully to doe us good, but afterwards we shall call to mind what wee have heard, and it shall cut us to the heart. *Dives* (we know) had *Moses* and the *Prophets* to instruct him, but he never heeded them in his life, untill afterwardsto his torment : So men never heed what they heare and read, they put off all and lay their consciences asleep ; but God will bring them afterwards to remembrance. But because it is a point especially of comfort to the Church,

Labour we all of us to make this use of it, to be

Use.

To attend dili-
gently upon the
ordinances of
God.

Luk. 16.25.

n
be diligent and carefull to heare and attend upo
the ordinances of God ; for howsoever that we
heare is not effectuall for the present, but seems
as dead seed cast into the heart, yet God will
give it *a body after*, as the Apostle speakes, at one
time or other. And that which we heare now, the
Holy-Ghost will bring it to our remembrance
when we stand in most need of it.

1 Cor. 15.28.

My soule failed when he spake.

She was in a spirituall swoone and deliquium
upon his withdrawing, whence the point consi-
derable is,

*That Christ doth leave his Church sometimes, and
bring it very low in their owne apprehensions, that
their hearts fayle them for want of his presence :* So
it was with *David*, so with *Ionah*, so with the
Church, Lam. 3.1. we see it at large.

Observe.

*Psal. 3.2,3.
Ionah 3.2.*

The necessity of our soules, and of our estates
require this, as sometimes a body may be so cor-
rupt, that it must be brought as low as possible
may be before there will be a spring of new and
good blood and spirits : so we may fall into such
a state of security that nothing will bring us to a
right temper, but extreame purging. And usually
God deales thus with strong wits and parts (if
they be holy) *David* and *Solomon* were men ex-
cellently qualified; yet when they tasted of the
pleasures and contentments of the world too
deep, answerably they had, and so (usually)
others shall have such desertions as will make
them smart for their sweetnesse, as was shewed
before.

Reason.

SER.X.

The heart sinkes.

1.
When God appears
an enemy.
Job 7.20.

2.
When Christ's
love is absent
and not felt.
Simile.

3.
When they
miss of former
assistance in
hol'ly duties.

But upon what occasions doth a Christian thinke especially, that God doth leave, forsake and fayle him.

First, This fayling and fainting of the soule is sometimes upon an apprehension, as if God and Christ were become enemies, as *Job* saith, and as having set us as a But to shoot at, but this is not all that a gracious and pure heart sinkes for.

But also secondly, For the absence of Christ's love, though it feele no anger. Even as to a loving Wife, her husband not looking lovingly upon her as he used to doe, is enough to cast her downe, and cause her spirits to fayle: so for God to looke upon the soule; put the case not with an angry, yet with a countenance withdrawne, it is sufficient to cast it downe; for any one that hath dependance upon another, to see their countenance withdrawne, and not to shew their face as before: If there be but a sweet disposition in them, it is enough to daunt and dismay them.

Nay, Moreover when they find not that former assistance in holy duties, when they find that their hearts are shut up, and they cannot pray as formerly when they had the Spirit of God more fully; and when they find that they cannot beare afflictions with wonted patience, certainly Christ hath withdrawne himselfe (say they.) This is first done when wee heare the word of God not with that delight and profit as we were wont, when they find how they come neare to God in holy communion, and yet feele

not

not that sweet tast and relish in the ordinances of God as they were wont to doe ; they conclude certainly God hath hid his face, whereupon they are cast downe, their spirits fayle. And doe not wonder that it should be so; for it is so in nature; when the Sunne hides it selfe many dayes from the world, it is an uncomfortable time, the spirits of the creatures lowre and wither ; we see it so in the body, that the animall spirits in the braine (which are the cause of motion and sence) if they be obstructed, there followes an *Apoplexie* and deadnesse. So it is between Christ and the soule, he is the *Sunne of Righteousnesse*, by whose beames we are all comforted and cheared, which when they are withheld, then our spirits decay and are discouraged. Summer and Winter arise from the presence and absence of the Sunne. What causeth the Spring to be so cloathed with all those rich ornaments ? the presence of the Sun which comes nearer then. So what makes the Summer and Winter in the soule, but the absence or presence of Christ? what makes some so vigorous beyond others, but the presence of the Spirit ? As it is in nature, so it is here, the presence of Christ is the cause of all spirituall life and vigour ; who when he withdrawes his presence a little, the soule fayles.

Mal. 4. 2.

My soule failed when he spake to me, I sought him but I could not find him, I called but he gave me no answer.

The Church redoubleth her complaint to shew

Observ.

SER. X.

Obser.

shew her passion, *A large heart bath large exprefſions;* ſhe took it to heart that Christ did not shew himſelfe in mercy; therfore ſhe never hath done, *I ſought him, but I could not find him, I called, but he gave me no answer.*

Affection makes eloquent and large exprefſions.

But mainly obſerve from this fayling of the Church, *The difference between the true children of God and others.* The childe of God is cast down when he finds not the presence of God, as he was wont, his ſpirits faile. A carnall man that neuer knew what this presence meant, regards it not, can abide the want of it ; he finds indeed a presence of God in the creature which he thinks not of ; there is a ſweetneſſe in meat, drinke, reſt, and a contentment in honour, preferment, and riches ; And thus God is present alwayes with him. But other presence he cares not for ; nay, he ſhuns all other presence of God, labouring to avoid his ſpirituall presence : For what is the reaſon that a carnall man ſhuns the applying of the word and the thinking of it, but because it brings God neare to his heart, and makes him present ? What is the reaſon he ſhuns his own conſcience ; that he is loath to heare the just and unansweable accuſations that it would charge upon him , but because he cannot abide the presence of God in his conſcience ? What is the reaſon he ſhuns the ſight of holier and better men then himſelfe ? they present God to him being his Image, and call his ſinnes to memory, and upbraid his wicked life. Hence comes that ſatani-

call hatred more then humane in carnall vile men, to those that are better then themselves, because they hate all presence of God, both in the Word, Ministry, and all Gods holy servants; all such presence of God they hate, whereof one maine reason is, because they are malefactors, wicked rebels, and intend to be so. And as a malefactor cannot endure so much as the thought of the Judge, so they cannot thinke of God otherwise (in that course they are in) then of a Judge, whereupon they tremble and quake at the very thought of him, and avoyd his presence.

You know that great man *Felix, Paul* spake to in the *Actes*, when he spake of the judgement to come, and those vertues, as Temperance, and Righteousnesse, which he was void of, and guilty of the contrary vices, he quaked, and could not endure to heare him speake any longer. Wicked men love not to be arraigned, tormented, accused and condemned before their time; therefore whatsoever presents to them their future terrible estate, they cannot abide it. It is an evidence of a man in a cursed condition, thus not to endure the presence of God; but what shall God and Christ say to them at the day of judgement? It was the desire of such men not to have to doe with the presence of God here; and it is just with Christ to answer them there as they answer him now, *Depart, depart, we will have none of thy wayes* (say they) *Depart ye cursed* (saith he) He doth but answer in their owne language, *Depart ye cursed*

A& 24.25.

Mark 5.7.

Iob 22.17.

SER. X.

cursed with the Devill and his Angels.

But you see the Childe of God is cleane of another temper, he cannot be content to be without the presence of God and of his Spirit enlightning, quickning, strengthening and blessing of him in spirituall respects. When he finds not his presence helping him, when he fiads Christ his life is absent from him, he is presently disengaged : For, *Christ is our life.* Now when a mans life fayles all fayles, when therefore a man finds his spirituall tast and comfort not as it was before, then oh, *the life of my life* hath withdrawne himselfe, and so is never quiet till hee have recovered his life againe, for *Christ is his life.*

Col. 3.4.

And because there is a presence of God and of Christ in the Word and Sacraments, a sweet presence: the godly soule he droops and failes if he be kept from these, he will not excommunicate himselfe as many doe, that perhaps are asleep when they should be at the ordinances of God ; but if he be excommunicated and banished, O how takes heit to heart ! *Psal. 42.1. As the Hart panteth after the water brooks, so longeth my soule after thee, O God.* The whole 84. Psalme is to that purpose, *O how amiable are thy Tabernacles O Lord of Hosts ?* He finds a presence of God in his Word and Sacraments, and when he doth not tast a sweet presence of God therein, he droops and sinks.

A carnall man never heeds these things because he finds no sweetnesse in them, but the godly

godly finding Christ in them they droop in the want of them, and cannot live without them, Whither shall we goe (saith Peter to Christ) thou hast the words of eternall life, I finde my soule quickned with thy speaking. So a soule that feels the quickning power of the ordinances, he will never be kept from the meanes of salvation, but he droops and is never well till he have recovered himselfe againe ?

Againe, another difference may be observed, Carnall men when they find the sence of Gods anger, they seeke not Gods favour, but thinke of worse and worse still, and so run from God till they be in hell. But those that are Gods children, when they faile and find the sence of Gods displeasure, they are sensible of it, and give not over seeking to God, they run not further and further from him.

The Church here though she found not Christ present with her, yet shee seeks him still, and never gives over.

Whence againe we may observe, *That although the Church be said to faile, and not to find Christ, yet he is present then with her.* For who inabled her to seeke him. To explaine this, there is a double presence of Christ.

1. Felt.

2. Not felt.

The presence felt, is when Christ is graciously present, and is withall pleased to let us know so much, which is a Heaven upon Earth ; the soule is in Paradise then, when shee feels the love of God

Obseru.

That there is a double presence of Christ felt and not felt.

1.
His presence felt.

SER.X.

God shed abroad in the heart, and the favourable countenance of God shining upon her, then she despiseth the world, the devill and all, and walks as if she were halfe in Heaven already ; for she finds a presence and a manifestation of it, a more glorious state then the world can affourd.

2.
*Christ's unselt
secret presence.*

Mat. 15.

Gen. 32.

But, *There is a presence of Christ that is secret,* when he seems to draw us one way, and to drive us another, that we are both driven and drawne at once; when he seems to put us away, and yet notwithstanding drawes us ; when we find our soules goe to Christ, there is a drawing power and presence, but when we find him absent, here is a driving away. As we see here in the Church and in the *woman of Canaan*, we see what an answer she had from Christ ; at first none, and then an uncomfortable, and lastly a most unkind answer. *We must not give the childrens bread to dogs.* Christ seemed to drive her away, but at the same time he by his Spirit drawes her to him, and was thereby secretly present in her heart to increase her faith. When Christ wrestled with *Jacob*, though he contended with him, yet the same time he gave *Jacob* power to overcome him, to be *Israel* a prevailer over him : so at the same time the Church seemes to faile and faint ; yet notwithstanding there is a secret drawing power pulling her to Christ, whereby she never gives over, but seekes and calls still after him.

It is good to observe this kind of Christ's dealing, because it will keep us that we be not disengaged

couraged when we find him absent. If still there be any grace left moving us to that which is good: If we find the Spirit of God moving us to love the word and ordinances, to call upon him by prayer, and to be more instant, certainly we may gather there is a hidden, secret presence here that drawes us to these things; nay more that the end of this seeming forsaking and strangenesse is to draw us nearer and nearer, and at length to draw us into Heaven to himselfe. Gods people are gainers by all their losses, stronger by all their weaknesses, and the better for all their crosses whatsoever they are. And you shall find that the Spirit of God is more forceable in them after a strangenesse, to stirre them up more eagerly after Christ then before; as here the Church doth for her eagernes, constancy and instantnesse it groweth, as Christ's withdrawing of himselfe groweth.

Let us therefore learne hence how to judge of our selves, if we be in a dead livelesse state, both in regard of comfort and of holy performances, whether we be content to be so. If we be not contented, but make towards Christ more and more, it is a good signe that he hath not forsaken us, that he will come againe more gloriously then ever before. As here we shall see after it was with the Church, he seemes strange, but it is to draw the Church to discover her affection, and to make her ashamed of her former unkindnesse, and to sit surer and hold faster then she did before, all ends in a most sweet communion.

*Use 1.
How to judge
our selves in a
dead livelesse
estate, both in
regard of com-
fort and holy
performances.*

Wc

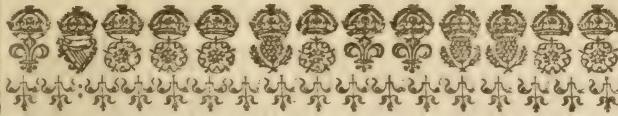
S R. X.

Use 2.

We should depend upon Christ in a seeming absence.

We should labour therefore to answer Christs deale in suitable apprehensions of soule, when he is thus present secretly, though hee seeme in regard of some comforts and former experience of his love to withdraw himselfe. It should teach us to depend upon him, and to beleevethough wee feele not comfort, yea against comfort, when we feele signes of displeasure. If he can love and support me, and strengthen my soule, and shew it a presence of that which is fit for mee. Certainly I should answer thus with my faith, I will depend upon him (though he kill me) as *Job* did ; our soules should never give over seeking of Christ, praying and endeavouring, for there is true love where he seems to forsake and leave ; therefore I ought in these desertions to cleave to him in life and in death.

THE



The eleventh Sermon.

CANT. V. VI.VII.

I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawne himselfe, and was gone : my soule failed when he spake, I sought him but could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no answer, &c.



He pride and security of the Spouse provokes the Lord her Husband oft to bring her very low , they being incompatible with Christ's residence.

Pride is an affection contrary to his prerogative, for it sets up somewhat in the soule higher then God the highest.

Security is a dull temper, or rather distemper that makes the soule neglect her watch, and relye upon some outward priviledge, where this ill couple is entertained, there Christ useth to withdraw himselfe, even to the failing and fainting of the soule.

The Spouse is here in her fainting fit, yet she seeks after Christ, still she gives not over : so *Jonas, I am cast out of thy presence* (sayes he) yet notwithstanding

T

withstanding

Jonah 2.

I sought him but I could not find him.

withstanding I will looke toward thy holy Temple. And David, Psal. 31.22. I said in my hast I am cast out of thy sight, yet notwithstanding thou heardest the voyce of my prayer. He said it, but he said it in his hast. Gods children are surprized on the sudden to thinke they are cast away ; but it is in hast, and so soon as may be they recover themselves. *I said it is my infirmity,* said David, Psal. 73. It is but in a passion. Here then is the difference between the children of God and others in desertions , they arise, these lye still and despaire. There is *life in the substance of the Oake* that makes it lift up its head above ground, though it be cut downe to the stumps. Nay we see further here, the Church is not taken off for any discouragements, but her faith growes stronger, as the *womans of Canaan* did.

II. 13.

Mat. 15.

I.

2.

The Reason whereof is, *Faith* lookes to the Promise, and to the nature of God, not to his present dealing.

And then God by a secret worke of his Spirit (though he seeime to be an enemy yet notwithstanding) drawes his children nearer and nearer to him by such his dealing. All this strangenesse is but to mortifie some former lust, or consume some former dregs of security.

I sought him but I could not find him.

Here one of the greatest discouragements of all other is, when prayer (which is left to the Church as a salve for all sores) hath no answer. This is the complaint, but indeed an errour of the Church ; for Christ did heare the Church

Church though hee seemed to turne his backe.

But how shall we know that God heares our prayers?

Amongst many other things this is one; when he gives us inward peace, then he heares our prayers, for so is the connexion, *Rhil. 4.6,7.*

Or secondly, If we find a Spirit to pray still, a Spirit to wait and to hold out, it is an argument that God either hath or will heare those prayers.

And as it is an argument that God heares our prayers, so is it of the presence of Christ; for how could wee pray but from his inward presence? Christ was now present, and more present with the Church when he seemed not to be found of her, then he was when she was secure, for whence else comes this eagernes of desire, this spirit of prayer, this earnestnesse of seeking?

I called, but he gave no answer, &c.

Directions how to carry our selves in such an estate. How shall we carry our selves when it falleth out that our hearts faile of that we seeke for, when we pray without successe, and find not a present answer, or are in any such like state of desertion?

1. *We must beleeeve against belief* (as it were) *hope against hope, and trust in God,* Howsoever he shewes himselfe to us as an opposite. It is no matter what his present dealing with his Church and Children here is, the nature of Faith is to breakthrough all opposition, to see the Sun behind

SER.XI.

*How to know
that God bears
our prayers.*

*If he therewith
gives us inward
peace.*

Phil 4.

2.

*A spirit to hold
out in prayer
though without
peace.*

Rom.4.

2 Cor.6.

I sought him but I could not find him.

hind a cloud, nay to see one contrary in another, life in death, a calme in a storne, &c.

2. Labour for an absolute dependancy upon Christ with a poverty of spirit in our selves, this is the end of Christ's withdrawing himselfe, to purge us of selfe-confidence and pride.

3. Stirre up your graces, for as nature joyning with physicke helps it to woike and carry away the malignant humours : so by the remainder of the Spirit that is in us, let us set all our graces on work untill we have carried away that that offends and clogs the soule, and not sinke under the burden, for this is a speciall time for the exercising of faith, hope, love, diligence, care, watchfulnesse, and such like graces.

And let us know for our comfort, that even this conflicting condition is a good estate. In a sicke body it is a signe of life and health approaching when the humours are stirred, so as that a man complains that the physick works. So when we take to heart our present condition, though we faile and find not what we would, yet this will worke to the subduing of corruption at length. *It is a signe of future victory when we are discontent with our present ill estate. Grace will get the upper hand, as nature doth when the humors are disturbed.*

4. Againe, when we are in such a seeming forlorne estate, Let us have recourse to former experience. What is the reason that God vouchsafes his children for the most part in the beginning of their conversion (in their first love) experience

experience of his love to ravishment ? It is, that afterwards they may have recourse to that love of God then felt to support themselves ; and withall to stirre up endeavours and hope ; that finding it not so well with them now, as formerly it hath been, by comparing state wirth state, desires may be stirred up to be as they were, or rather better.

Hof. 2.7.

And as the remembrance of former experiences serves to excite endeavour, so to stirre up *Hope*. I hope it shall be as it was, because God is Immutable. I change, but Christ alters not, the inferiour elementary world changes, here is faire weather and foule, but the Sunne keeps his perpetuall course ; and as in the glomiest day that ever was, there was light enough to make it day, and to distinguish it from night (though the Sunne did not shine :) So in the most disconsolate state of a Christian soule, there is light enough in the soule, to shew that the *Sun of Righteousnesse* is there, and that Christ hath shined upon the soule, that it is day with the soule and not night.

Psal. 112.4.

5. And learne when we are in this condition to wait Gods leisure, for he hath waited ours. It is for our good, to prepare us for further blessings, to mortifie and subdue our corruptions, to inlarge the capacity of the soule, that the Lord absents himselfe, therefore *Bernard* saith well, *Tibi accidit, &c. Christ comes and goes away for our good*; when he withdrawes the fence of his love, the soule thereupon is stretched with desire,

SER. XI.

Object.

Mat. 7.7.

Answe.

Isa. 63.34.

Judging of
grace by the
quantity, and
not by the
value.
1 Pet. 1.

that it may be as it was in former time, in the dayes of old. Thus much for that, *I sought him, but I could not find him, I called but he gave me no answer.*

Here wee must answer one objection before we leave the words. *This seems to contradict other Scriptures, which promise that those that seeke shall find.* It is true, they that seeke shall find, but not presently. Gods times are the best and fittest. They that seeke shall find, if they seek constantly with their whole heart in all the meanes, Some doe not find, because they seeke in one meanes and not in another; they seeke Christ in reading, and not in the ordinance of hearing, in private meditation, but not in the communion of Saints; we must goe through all meanes to seeke Christ, not one must be left. Thus if we will seeke him, undoubtedly hee will make good his promise; nay in some sort, *he is found before he is sought*, for he is in our soules to stirre up desire of seeking him; he prevents us with desires, and answers us in some sort before we pray, *when he gives us a Spirit of Prayer, it is a pledge to us, that he meanes to answer us.* Therefore it is a spirituall deceit, when we thinke Christ is not in us, and we are neglected of him, because we have not all that we would have. Among many other deceits that Christians deceive themselves with in this kind, these be two.

1. That they judge grace by the quantity, and not by the value and price of it, whereas the least measure of grace and comfort is to be esteemed, be-

because it is an immortall seed cast into the soule by an immortall God, the Father of Eternity.

2. Another deceit is, That we judge of our selves by sense and feeling, and not by faith.

The watchmen that went about the City found me and smote me, and tooke away my vaile from me.

Here the poore Church after the letting down of her own exercise in her desertion, now sets out some outward ill dealing she met with, and that from those that should have been her greatest comforters. *The watchmen that went about the City found me, they wounded me, the keepers of the wals tooke away my vaile from me.*

Thus we see how trouble followes trouble, One depth calls upon another : Inward desertion and outward affliction goe many times together. The troubles of the Church many times are like Iobs messengers, they come fast one upon another; because God meanes to perfect the worke of Grace in their hearts, all this is for their good. *The sharper the Winter the better the Spring.* Learne hence first of all therefore in-generall,

That it is no easie thing to be a sound Christian.

We see here when the Church had betrothed her selfe to Christ, and entertained him into her garden, there after she falleth into a state of security and sleep, whence Christ labours to rouze her up ; then she useth him unkindly, after which he withdrawes himselfe, even so farre that her heart fayles her ; then (as if this were not enough) the watchmen that should have looked to her, *they smite her, wound her, and take away her vayle.* See

SER.XI.
*Judging of our
selues by sense
and feeling.*

Observ.

SER.XI.

here the variety of the usage of the Church, and changes of a Christian, not long in one state, he is ebbing and flowing.

Therefore let none distaste the way of God-linesse for this, that it is such a state as is subject to change and variety; whereas carnall men are upon their lees, and find no changes.

Object.

But you will say, *All Christians are not thus tossed up and downe, so deserted of God, and persecuted of others.*

Answ.

I answer, Indeed there is difference. Whence comes that difference? from Gods liberty; it is a mystery of the Sanctuary, which no man in the world can give a reason of, why of Christians both equally beloved of God, some should have a fairer passage to Heaven, others rougher and more rugged; It is a mystery hid in Gods breast. It is sufficient for us if God will bring us any way to Heaven, as the blessed Apostle saith, *If by any meanes I might attaine to the resurrection of the dead, either through thicke or thin, if God will bring me to Heaven it is no matter. If I by any meanes.*

Phil.3.11.

The Watchmen that went about the City, smote me, &c.

By the Watchmen here are meant especially governors of State and Church.

Why are they called Watchmen?

It is a borrowed speech taken from the custome of Cities that are beleagured; for policies sake they have Watchmen to descry the danger they are lyable unto: so Magistrates be wateh-

watchmen of the State, Ministers are the watchmen for Soules, watching over our Soules for good.

Why ar not God nse Watchmen?

Not for any defect of power in him, but for demonstration of his goodness; for he is the great Watchman, who watcheth over our Commonwealths, Churches and Persons; he hath an eye that never sleeps, *He that watcheth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps*; yet notwithstanding he hath subordinate Watchmen, not for defect of power, but for demonstration of goodness; he manifests his goodness in that he will use variety of subordinate Watchers.

And likewise to shew his power in using many instruments, and his care for us when he keeps us together with his owne subordinate means.

And in this that God hath set over us Watchers (Ministers especially) It implieth that *our souls are in danger*; and indeed there is nothing in the world so beset as the soule of a poore Christian; who hath so many and so bad enemies as a Christian? and amongst them all, the worst and greatest enemy he hath is nearest to him, and converseth daily with him, even himselfe. Therefore there must needs be *Watchmen* to discover the deceits of Satan and his instruments, and of our owne hearts, to discover the dangers of *Ierusalem*, and the errors and sins of the times wherein we live. The Church is in danger, for God hath set Watchmen, now God and nature doth nothing in vaine or needlesly.

Againe,

S E R. XI.
Heb. 13. 17.

Quesst.
Answ. I

Psal. 124. 4.

SER.XI.
Arguments
shewing the
preciousnes
of the soule.

Againe, in that God takes such care for the soule, it shewes the wondrous worth of it. Many arguments there be to shew that the soule is a precious thing, it was breathed by God at first, Christ gave his life to redeeme it ; but this is an especiall one that God hath ordained and establisched a Ministry and Watchmen over it. And as God hath set some men Watchmen over others, so hath he appointed every man to be a Watchman to himselfe. He hath given every man a City to watch over, that is, his owne estate and soule; therefore let us not depend altogether on the watching of others. *God hath planted a conscience in every of us,* and useth as others to our good : so our owne care, wisedome, and foresight, these he elevateth and sanctifieth.

The Watchmen that went about the City found me, they smote me, they wounded me, &c.

Come wee now to the carriage of these Watchmen, those that should have been defensive prove most offensive.

They smote the Church, and wounded her many wayes (though it be not discovered here in particular) as with their ill and scandalous life, and sometimes with *corrupt doctrine*, and otherwhiles with bitter words, and their unjust *censures*, as we see in the story of the Church, especially the *Romish Church*, they have excommunicated Churches and Princes ; but not to speake of those Synagogues of Satan, come we nearer home, and we may see amongst our selves sometimes those that are Watchmen, and should be

How the Church
was wounded
by the Watch-
men.

1.

2.

3.

3 Ioh. 9.

be for encouragement ; they smite and wound the Church, and take away her vaile.

What it is to take away the vaile.

You know in the times of the *Old Testament* availe was that which covered women for modesty, to shew their subjection ; and it was likewise an honourable ornament, *They tooke away the vaile*, that is, that wherewith the Church was covered, they tooke away that that made the Church comely, and laid her open, and as it were naked.

Now both these wayes, the Churches vaile is taken away by false and naughty Watchmen.

1. As the *vaile* is a token of subjection, when by their false Doctrines they labour to draw people from Christ, and their subjection to him.

The Church is Christs Spouse, the *vaile* was a token of subjection : Now they that draw the people to themselves, as in Popish Churches, that desire to sit high in the consciences of people, and so make the Church undutifull, *They take away the vaile of subjection*, and so force Christ to punish the Church, as we see in the former ages.

2. As the *vaile* is for honour and comeliness, so they *take away the vaile of the Church*, when they *take away the credit and esteem of the Church*, when they lay open the infirmities and weaknesses of the Church. This is strange that the Watchmen should do this, yet notwithstanding oftentimes it fals out so, that those that by place are Watchmen, are the bitterest enemies of the Church.

Who

SER.XI.
3 Ioh. 10.

I.
*They tooke
away the vaile
of her sub-
jection.*

2.
*The vaile of
her honour and
comeliness.*

SER. XI.

Who were bitterer enemies of the poor Church in Christ's time than the *Scribes, Pharisees and Priests*.

And so in the time of the *Prophets*, who were the greatest enemies the Church had, but false *Priests and Prophets*?

Quest.

What is the ground of this, that those men that by their standing should be encouragers, are rather dampers of the Churches Zeale in pursuit of it?

There are many grounds of it.

Answ.
Why the watch
men are the
wonders of the
Church.

Sometimes it falleth out from a spirit of envy in them at the graces of God's people which are wanting in themselves, they would not have others better than themselves.

Sometimes from Idleness, which makes them hate all such as provoke them to pains; they raise up the dignity of outward things too much, as we see in Popery, they make every thing to confer grace, as if they had a speciall vertue in them; but they neglect that wherewith God hath joined an efficacy, his owne ordinances.

Use I.

This should teach us, *To be in love with Christ's government*, and to see the vanity of all things here below, though they be never so excellent in their ordinance. Such is the poyson of man's heart, and the malice of Satan, that they turn the edge of the best things against the good of the Church.

What is more excellent than Magistracy, yet many times the point of the sword is directed the wrong way. *I have said ye are gods, Psal. 82.6.* They should governe, as God himselfe would governe,

governe and aske with themselves, would God now if he were a Watchman of the state do thus and thus, but I wish wofull experience did not witnesse the contrary.

So *Ministers* are *Christs Embassadors*, and should carry themselves even as Christ would doe; they should strengthen the feeble knees and bind up the broken hearted, not discourage and not sow pillowes under the arme-holes of wicked and carnall men : But alas we see the edge of the ordinance is oftentimes turned another way by the corrupt, proud, unbroken hearts of men, and the malice of Satan.

Againe it should teach us, not to thinketh the worse of any for the disgraces of the times. The Watchmen here take away the vaile of the Church, and her forwardnesse is disgraced by them: take heed therefore we entertaine not rash conceits of others, upon the entertainment they find abroad in the world, or among those that have a standing in the Church ; for so we shall condemne Christ himselfe ; how was he judged of the *Priests, Scribes, and Pharisees* in his times ? and this hath been the lot of the Church in all ages, the true members thereof were called *Hereticks and Schismaticks*, *the vaile was taken off*. It is the poysenfull pride of mans heart , that when it cannot raise it selfe by its owne worth, it will endeavour to raise it selfe by the ruine of others credit through lying slanders. The Devill was first a slanderer, and lyar, and then a murtherer ; he cannot murther without he slander first ; the

SER. XI.

2 Cor. 5.20

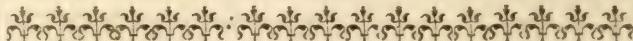
Ezek. 13.18.

Vſe 2.

Ioh. 8.

SER. XII.

the credit of the Church must first be taken away and then she is wounded, otherwise as it is a usall proverbe, *Those that kill a dog make the world believe that he was mad first*: so they alwayes first traduced the Church to the world, and then persecuted her. *Truth hath always a scratch face*. Falshood many times goes under better habits then its owne, which God suffers to exercise our skill and wisedome that we might not depend upon the rash judgement of others, but might consider what grounds they have; not what men doe or whom they oppose, but from what cause. Whether from a Spirit of Envy, Idlenesse, Jealousie, and Pride, or from good grounds: Else if Christ himselfe were on earth againe, we should condemne him, as now men doe the generation of the just, whom they smite and wound, and take away their vaile from them.



The twelfth Sermon.

CANT. V. VII.

*The Watchmen that went about the City found me,
they smote me, they wounded me, the Keepers of the
wall tooke away my vaile from me.*

He Watchmen (Those that by their place and standing should be so) they smote the Church (as Bernard complaines almost

most 500.yeares agoe) alas, alas saith he, those that doe seeke priviledges in the Church,are the first in persecuting it ; and (as his fashion is to speake in a kind of Rhetoricke) they were not pastors, but impostors. There be two ordinances without which the world cannot stand.

1. *Magistracie.*2. *Ministerie.*

Magistrates are nursing Fathers, and nursing Mothers to the Church.

Ministers are *Watchmen* by their place and standing.

Now for Shepheards to become *wolves*, for Watchmen to become *smiters*, what a pittifull thing is it; but thus it is, the Church hath been alwayes persecuted with these men, under pretence of Religion, which is the sharpest persecution of all in the Church; it is a grievous thing to suffer of an enemy, but worse of a country man, worse then that of a friend, and worst of all of the Church. Notwithstanding (by the way) we must know, that the persecuted cause is not alway the best (as *Austin* was forced to speake in his time against the *Donatists*) *Sarah* was a type of the true, and *Hagar* of the false Church. Now *Sarah* she corrected *Hagar*, therefore it followes not, that the suffering cause is alway the better; therefore we must judge of things in these kind of passages by the caufe, and not by the outward carriage of things.

The persecuted side is not alwayes the best.

They tooke away my vaille.

*What shall we doe in such cases, if we suffer any
in-*

SER. XII.

indignity, if the vaile be taken off. That is, if our shame, infirmities, and weaknesses be laid open by false imputations.

Ans^w.

In this case, it is *the innocence of the Dove*, that is to be laboured for, and withall the wisedome of the *Serpent*. If Innocency will not serve, labour for wisedome, as indeed it will not alone; the wicked would then labour for subtily to disgrace righteous persons.

Object.

But what if that will not serve neither. Christ was wisedome it selfe, yet he suffered most; when *Innocencie* and *wisdom* will not do it (because we must be conformable to our head) *then we must labour for patience*, knowing that one haire of our heads shall not fall to the ground without the providence of the Almighty. Commend our case, as Christ did, by faith and prayer to God that judgeth.

I charge you, O Daughters of Hierusalem, if you see my Beloved, that you tell him, that I am sicke of Love, &c.

Here the Church after her ill usage of the Watchmen, is forced to the society of other Christians, not so well acquainted with Christ as her selfe: *I charge ye O Daughters of Ierusalem, if you find my Beloved, &c. Tell him, &c.* What shall they tell him.

Tell him I am sicke of Love.

The Church is restlesse in her desire and pursuit after Christ, till she find him, no opposition you see can take off her endeavour.

I. Christ

1. Christ seemes to leave her inwardly.
2. Then she goeth to the Watchmen, they smite and wound her.
3. Then she hath recourse to the Daughters of Jerusalem for help.

Generally before we come to the particulars, from the connexion we may observe this,

That Love is a fire kindled from Heaven.

Nothing in the world will quench this Grace, no opposition, nay opposition rather whets and kindles endeavour.

The Church was nothing discouraged by the ill usage of the Watchmen, only she complaines she is not insensible. A Christian may without sinne be sensible of indignities, onely it must be *the mourning of Doves, and not the roaring of Bears.* It must not be murmuring and impatiencie, but a humble complaining to God, that he may take our case to heart, as the Church doth here : But as sensible as she was, she was not a whit discouraged, but seeks after Christ still in other means, if she find him not in one, she will try in an other : we see here the nature of love, if it be in any measure perfect, it casteth out all feare of discouragements.

And indeed, *It is the nature of true Grace to grow up with difficulties :* As the Arke rose higher with the waters, so likewise the soule growes higher and higher, it mounts up as discouragements and oppositions grow : Nay, the soule takes vigour and strength from discouragements, as the wind increaseth the flame : So the

SER.XII.

1.

2.

3.

Obser.

Can.8.7.

How farre we
may be sensible
of injuries.

Isa 38.

The nature of
true Grace.

SER. XII.

*A signe of cold-
neſſe in Reli-
gion.*

2 Cor. 5.14.

*Vſe of encou-
ragement and
tryall.*

Obſerv.

Grace of God, the more the winds and waves of affliction oppose it, with so much the more violence, it breaks through all oppositions, untill it attaine the desired hope.

To apply it, Those therefore that are ſoone discouraged, that pull in their hornes preſently, it is a ſigne they are very cold, and have but little grace; for where there is any ſtrength of holy affection, they will not be discouraged, nor their zeale be quenched and damped; therefore they subordinate Religion to their owne ends, as your temporary beleevers. Where is any love to Christ? the love of Christ is of a violent nature, it ſwayes in the heart, as the Apostle ſpeaks, *The love of Christ constraineth us.*

If we find this inconquerable resolution in our ſelves, notwithstanding all discouragements, to goe on in a good cause, let us acknowledge that fire to be from Heaven, let us not lose ſuch an argument of the ſtate of Grace, as ſuffering of afflictions with joy. The more we ſuffer, the more we ſhould rejoice, if the caufe be good, as the Apostles, *Act. 5.41.* rejoiced that they were accounted worthy to ſuffer any thing.

I charge you, Oh Daughters of Ierusalem, if you find my Beloved, that yet tell him I am ſicke of Love.

Shee goes to the Daughters of Ierusalem for help, whence we may leарne.

That, *If we find not comfort in one means, we muſt have recourse to another.*

If we find not Christ preſent in one, ſeeke him in

in another, and perhaps we shall find him where we least thought of him ; sometimes there is more comfort in the society of poore Christians, then of the Watchmen themselves.

SER.XII.

I charge you, O Daughters of Jerusalem, &c.

Where we have,

1. A charge given.

2. The parties charged, *the Daughters of Jerusalem.*

3. The particular thing they are charged with, that is (if they find Christ) *to tell him she is sicke of Love.*

The parties charged, are *the Daughters of Jerusalem*, the Daughters of the Church, which is called *Jerusalem*, from some resemblances between *Jerusalem* and the Church; some few shall be touched, to give light to the point.

3.

The proportion
between *Jeru-*
salem and the
Church.

Jerusalem was a City compact in it selfe (as the Psalmist saith) so is the Church, the body of Christ.

1.

Psal. 122.3.

Jerusalem was chosen from all places of the world, to be the seat of God : so the Church is the seat of Christ, he dwels there in the hearts of his children.

2.

It is said of *Jerusalem*, they went up to *Jerusalem*, and downe to *Egypt*, and other places: So the Church is from above, *The way of wisedome is on high*. Religion is upward, Grace, Glory, and Comfort come from above, and draw our minds up to have our conversation and our desires above.

3.

Gal. 4.16.

Prov. 15.24.

Jerusalem was the joy of the whole earth : so the Church

4.

SER.XII.

Psal.48.3.

5.

Heb.12.23.

1 Pet.3.20.

1 Pet.2.2.

Observe.

How to know
that we are
Daughters of
Ierusalem.

Gal.4.16.

Psal.137.5;6.

Church of God, what were the world without it, but a company of incarnate Devils.

In Ierusalem Records were kept of the names of all the Citizens there ; so all the true Citizens of the Church, their names are written in the booke of life in Heaven.

The *Daughters of Ierusalem* therefore are the true members of the Church that are both bred and fed in the Church. Let us take a tryall of our selves, whether we be *Daughters of Ierusalem* or no. That we may make this tryall of our selves.

1. If we find freedome in our conscience from terrours and feares. If we find spirituall liberty and freedome to serve God, it is a signe that we are *Daughters of Ierusalem*, because *Ierusalem* was free.

2. Or if we mind things above, and things of the Church: If we take to heart the cause of the truth, it is a signe we are true *Daughters of Ierusalem*. We know what the Psalmist saith, *Let my right hand forget her cunning, if I forget thee O Ierusalem, if I doe not prefer Ierusalem before my chiefe joy*. If the cause of the Church goe to our hearts, if we can joy in the Churches joy, and mourne in the Churches abasement and suffering, it is a signe we are true *Daughters of Ierusalem*, and lively members of the body of Christ. Otherwise, when we heare that the Church goes downe, and that the adverse part prevailes, and we joy, it is a signe we are daughters of *Babylon* and not of *Ierusalem*.

Therefore let us take our affections what we are,

are, as Austin writes excellently in his booke de Civitate Dei, aske thy heart of what City thou art.

But what saith the Church to the *Daughters of Ierusalem* in the first place.

I charge you.

It is a kind of admiration supplied thus, I charge you as you love me your Sister, as you love Christ, as you tender my case that am thus used, as you will make it good that you are *Daughters of Ierusalem*, and not of Babylon, tell my Beloved that I am sicke of Love. It is a strong charge, a defective speech, which yeelds us this observation.

That true Affections are serious in the things of God and of Religion.

She layes a weight upon them, *I charge you O Daughters of Ierusalem*. True impressions have strong expressions; therefore are we cold in matters of Religion in our discourses, it is because we want these inward impressions. The Church here was full, she could not containe her selfe in regard of the largenesse of her affections. *I charge you O Daughters of Ierusalem, &c.*

We may find the truth of Grace in the heart by the discoveries and expressions in the conversation in generall.

I charge you, O Daughters of Ierusalem, if you find my Beloved, that ye tell him I am sicke of Love.

The Church here speaks to others meaner then her selfe, she should have the Church tell Christ (by Prayer, the surest intelligencer) how

S E R. XII.

Observe.

A signe of unbelief and coldnesse.

S.B.R.XII.

Quest.
Answ.

she was used, how she languished, and was sicke for him, and cannot be without him.

Why did not the Church tell Christ her selfe?

So she did as well as she could, but she desired the help of the Church this way also. Sometimes it is so with the Children of God, that they cannot pray so well as they should, and as they would doe, because the waters of the soule are so troubled, that they can doe nothing but utter groanes and sighes, especially in a state of desperation, as *Hezekiah* could but chatter, and *Moses* could not uttera word at the red Sea, though he did strive in his spirit; in such cases they must be beholding to the help of others.

Sometimes a man is in body sicke (as *James* saith) *If any man be sicke let him send for the Elders, and let them pray.* There may be such distemper of body and soule, that we are unfit to lay open our estate to our owne content. It is oft so with the best of Gods Children; not that God doth not respect those broken sighes and desires, but they give not content to the soule. The poore palsie-man in the Gospell not able to goe himselfe was carried on the shoulders of others, and let through the house to Christ: oft times we may be in such a palsie estate, that we cannot bring our selves to Christ; but we must be content to be borne to him by others.

I charge you O Daughters of Ierusalem, that ye tell my Beloved, I am sicke of Love.

Whence the point that I desire you would observe, is,

Iam. 5.14.

Mar. 2.2,3.

Tl at

*That at such times as we find not our spirits inlar-
ged from any cause outward and inward to comfort
and joy, then is a time to desire the prayers and help
of others.*

It is good to have a stocke going every where, and those thrive the best that have most prayers made for them , have a stocke going in every countrey, this is the happinesse of the Saints. To inforce this instruction, to desire the prayers of others, we must discover, that there is a wondrous force in the prayers of Christians one for another. It is more then a complement, would it were thought so.

The great Apostle *Paul*, see how he desires the *Romanes* , that they would strive and contend with God after a holy violence, by their joyn't prayers for him ; so he desires the *Thesalonians* that they would pray for him, *That he might be delivered from unreasonable men*. It is usuall with him to say, *Pray, pray*, and for us too, for such are gracious in the Court of Heaven. Despise none in this case , a true downe right experienced Christians prayers are of much esteeme with God. Our blessed Saviour himselfe, when he was to goe into the Garden, though his poore Disciples were sleepy, and very untoward , yet he would have their society and prayers.

*I charge you O Daughters of Ierusalem, if you find
my Beloved, that ye tell him I am sick of Love.*

To speake a little of the matter of the charge, *I am sicke of Love*, I love him, because I have found former comfort, strength, and sweetnesse

SER. XII.
Love sick
what.

from him, that I cannot be without him. To be Love-sickethen in the presence of the Church, is to have strong affections to Christ, from which comes wondrous disquietnesse of spirit in his absence, here is somewhat good, and somewhat ill. This is first her vertue, that she did fervently love, this was her infirmity, that she was so much distempered with her present want : These two breeds this sicknesse of love, whence we observe,

Where the thing loved is not present answerable to the desires of the soule that loves, there followes disquiet and distemper of affections ; That is here termed sicknesse of Love.

The Reason hereof is, *Naturall contentment is in union with the thing Loved.* The more excellent the thing is that is loved, the more contentment there is in communion with it, and where it is in any degree or measure hindred, there is disquiet : answerable to the contentment in enjoying, is the grieve, sorrow, and sicknesse in parting. The happiness of the Church consisting in society with Christ; therefore it is her misery and sicknesse to be deprived of him, not to enjoy him whom her soule so dearly loveth. There are few in the world sickle of this disease, I wold there were more sickle of the love of Christ ; there are many that surfe rather of fulnesse, who thinke we have too much of this *Manna*, of this preaching, of this Gospell, there is too much of this knowledge, of the ordinances, these are not sickle of love.

Make

Make a Use therefore of Tryall, whether we be in the state of the Church or no, by valuing and prizing the presence of Christ in his Ordinances, the Word and Sacraments.

There are many fond sicknesses in the world, there is *Ammons* sickness, that was sicke of love for his sister *Thamar*, his countenance discovered it, and *Ahab* he is sicke in desiring his Neighbours vineyard: You have many strange sicknesses, many sicke with fires kindled from the flesh, from Hell, but few sicke of this sickness here spoken of.

If we find our selves carried to Christ, to run in that stream as strong as the affections of those that are distempered with sickness of the love of other things, it will discover to us whether we be truly *Love-sicke* or not.

Take a man that is sicke for any earthly thing, whether of *Ahabs* or *Ammons* sickness, or of any thing, take it as you will, *That which the soule is sicke of in love, it thinks of daily, it dreames of it in the night.* What doe our soules therefore thinke of? what doe our meditations run after? When we are in our advised and best thoughts, what doe we most think of? if of Christ, of the state of the Church here, of Grace and Glory all is well, what makes us in the midst of all worldly discontentments to thinke all dung and drosse in comparison of Christ; but this sickness of love to Christ, if our love be in such a degree, as it makes us sicke of it, it makes us not to heare what we heare, not to see what we see, not to regard what

Sec. XII.
Use.

² Sam. 13. 2.

1 Kin. 12. 4.

1.

2.

S.B.R. XII.

what is present: the soule is in a kind of extasie, it is carried so strongly, and taken up with things of Heaven; it is deaded to other things, when our eyes are no more led with vanity then if we had none, and the flesh is so mortified, as if we were dead men, by reason of the strength of our affections that run another way to better things which are above.

3.

Thus we see it is in *Love*: Talke with a man that is in any heate of affections, you talke with one that is not at home, you talke with one absent, *The soule is more where it loves, then where it dwels.* Surely where love is in any strength, it drawes up the soule, so that a man oft times in his calling and ordinary imployments doth not heed them, but passeth through the world, as a man at randome, he regards not the things of the world; for Christ is gotten into his heart, and drawes all the affections to himselfe. Where the affection of love is strong, it cares not what it suffers for the party loved, nay it glories in it. As it is said of the *Disciples*, when they were whipped and scourged for preaching the Gospell, it was a matter of Glory to them: *It is not labour, but favour*; it is not labour and vexation, but favour that is taken where love is to the party loved, where the love of Christ is (which was here in the Church) labour is no labour, suffering is no suffering, trouble is no trouble.

A.C. 5.41.

4.

Againe, *It is the property of the party that is sicke of this disease to take little contentment in other things.* Tell a covetous worldling that is in love with

with the world a discourse of learning, what cares hee for learning ; tell him of a good bargaine, of a matter of gaine, and he will hearkento that. So it is with the soulethat hath felt the love of Christ shed abroad in the heart, tell him of the world (especially if he want that which he desires, the peace and strength that he found from Christ in former times) he relisheth not your discourse.

Labour wee therefore every day more and more , to have larger and larger affections to Christ. The soule that loves Christ, the nearer to Christ, the more joyfull it is, when he thinks of those mutuall embracings, when Christ and his soule shall meet together ; this happinesse is there where the soule enjoyes the thing loved, but that is not here, but in Heaven ; therefore in the meane time with joy he thankfully frequents the places where Christ is present in the Word and Sacrament, and that we may come to have this affection.

Let us see what our soules are without him, meere dungeons of darknesse and confusion, nothing comming from us that is good, this will breed love to the Ordinances, and then we shall relish Christ, both in the *Word* and *Sacrament*; for he is food for the hungry soule, and requires nothing of us but good appetites ; and this will make us desire his love and presence.



The thirteenth Sermon.

C A N T . V . V I I I . I X .

*I charge you O Daughters of Ierusalem if ye find my
Beloved, that ye tell him I am sicke of Love.
What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O
thou fairest among women, &c.*

Heb. 12.1.

Simile :



He soule as it is of an immortall substance, so in the right and true temper thereof, aspireth towards immortality , unlesse when it is clouded and overprest with that which presseth downwards, and the sinne which hangeth so fast on (as the Apostle speaks) which is the reason of those many and divers tossings and turmoylings of the enlightened soule, now up, now downe, now running amaine homewards, and now againe sluggish, idle and lazie, untill rowfed up by extraordinary meanes it puts on againe ; as the fire mounteth upwards unto its proper place ; and as the needle still trembleth till it stand at the North, so the soule once inflamed with an heavenly fire, and acquainted with her first originall cannot be at rest untill it find it selfe

selfe in that comfortable way which certainly leads homewards.

An instance whereof we have in the Church here, who having lost her sweet communion with Christ, and so paid dearly for her former neglect and sleighting his kind invitations (as being troubled, restlesse in mind, beaten and wounded by the watchmen, bereft of her vaile, &c.) Yet this heavenly fire of the blessed Spirit, this water of life so restlesly springing in her, makes her sicknesse of love and ardent desire after Christ to be such, that she cannot containe her selfe, but breaks forth into this passionate charge and request.

I charge you O Daughters of Ierusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him I am sicke of Love.

Thus we may see that the way to Heaven is full of changes, the strength of corruption over-clouds many times and damps our joyes. How many severall tempers hath the Church bin in? Sometimes she is all compounded of joy, vehemently desiring kisses of her best beloved, she holds her beloved fast, and will not let himgoe, and sometimes againe she is gone, hath lost her beloved, is in a sea of troubles, seeks and cannot find him, becomes sluggish, negligent, overtaken with selfe-love, after which when she hath smarted for her omissions (as here againe) she is all afire after Christ (as we say) no ground will hold her, away she flies after him, and is restlesse untill she find him. Where by the way we see, *That permanency and stability is for the life to come; here our*

SER.XIII.

our portion is to expect changes, stormes and tempests; therefore they must not be strange to particular persons, since it is the portion of the whole Church, which thus by sufferings and conformity to the head must enter into glory, whiles God makes his power perfect in our weaknesse, overcomes Satan by unlikely means, and so gets himselfe the glory, even out of our greatest infirmities, temptations, and abasements.

Rom.8.28.

But God though he make all things worke for good unto his children, even the Devil, sin and death, desertions, afflictions and all; yet we must be warned hereby not to tempt God, by neglecting the meanes appointed for our comfortable passage; but open to Christ when he knocks, imbrace him joyfully in his ordinances, and let our hearts fly open unto him: For though (through his Mercy) our wounds be cured; yet who would be wounded to try such dangerous experiments, as here befell the Church in her desertions, for her sluggish negligence, deadnesse, and selfe-love.

So that we see there is nothing gotten by favouring our selves in carnall liberty, security, or by yeelding to the flesh. The Church stood upon tearmes with Christ when he would have come in to her, but what ensued hereupon? She fell into a grievous desertion, and not only so, but finds very hard usage abroad, all which she might have prevented by watchfulness, carefulnesse and opening to Christs knocking. It is a spiritu-

all

2 Cor. 4.17.

2 Cor. 12.9.

all errour to which we are all prone, to thinke that much is gained by favouring our selves, but we shall find it otherwise. See here againe that God will beare with nothing though in his owne ; but he will sharply punish them even for omissions, and that not only with desertion, but somtimes they shall meet with oppositions in the world.

David cannot escape with a proud thought in numbring of the people, but he must smart for it and his people also. God is wondrous carefull of his Children to correct them, when he lets strangers alone. It is a signe of love when he is at this cost with us. And it should tie us to be carefull of our behaviour, not to presume upon Gods indulgence ; for the nearer we are to him, the more carefull he is over us, *he will be sanctified in all that come neare him.* We see the *Corinthians*, because they came unreverently to the Lords Table (though otherwise they were holy men, *some of them are sicke, some weake, others sleep, that they might not be condemned with the world.*)

Let none therefore think the profession of Religion to imply an immunity, but rather a straiter bond ; for *Judgement begins at the house of God,* whatsoever he suffers abroad, he will not suffer disorders in his own house, as the Prophet sayes, *You only have I knowne of all the families of the earth, therefore you shall not goe unpunished.* The Church is neare him, his Spouse whom he loveth, and therefore he will correct her, not enduring any abatement, or decay of the first love in her.

1 Sam. 1.

Amos 3.2.

Levit. 10.3.

1 Cor. 11.

Amos 3.2.

*If you find my Beloved,*S. R. XII.
Rev. 2.

her. And for this very cause he threateneth the Church of *Ephesus*, to remove her candlesticke.

To proceed, the poore Church here is not discouraged, but discovers and empties her selfe to the daughters of *Ierusalem*, as it is the nature of Culinary fire not onely to mount upwards, but also to bewray it selfe by light and heate : so of this heavenly fire when it is once kindled from above, not onely to aspire in its motion, but to discover it selfe in affesting others with its qualities, it could not containe it selfe here in the Church, but that she must goe to the daughters of *Ierusalem*, *I charge you O daughters of Ierusalem, if ye find my Beloved, that ye tell him I am sicke of love.* Therefore they may doubt that they have not this heavenly fire kindled in them, that express it not seriously, for of all affections it will not be concealed. *David wonders at his owne love, O how I love thy Law, oh how amiable are thy Tabernacles !*

Psal 119.

*A Love-sick
soule stands not
upon tearmes.*

Againe we see here, That where the soule is sickle of love, it stands not upon any tearmes, but it humbleth and abaseth it selfe. We say that affection stands not with Majestie, therefore Christ's love to us, moved him to abase himselfe in taking our nature that he might be one with us, love stood not upon tearmes of greatnessse ; Wee see the Church goes to those that were meaner proficients in Religion then her selfe, to powre out her Spirit to them, to the daughters of *Ierusalem*, she abaseth her selfe to any service, love endureth all things, anything to attaine to the thing loved;

¹ Thes. 2. 3.
¹ Cor. 13.

as we see *Hamor* the sonne of *Sichem*, he would endure painfull circumcision for the love hee bore to *Dinah*. So *Acts 5. 41.* it is said they went away rejoicing after they were whipped, because they loved Christ. The spirit of love made them rejoice when they were most disgracefully used.

Sometimes where this affection of heavenly love is prevalent, so that a man is sicke of it, the distempers thereof redounds to the body and reflects upon that, as we see in *David*, *Psal. 32. 4.*
That his moysture became as the drought of summer; because there is a marriage and a sympathie between the soule and the body, wherein the excessive affections of the one redound and reflect upon the other.

Tell him that I am sicke of love, here is a sicknesse, but not unto death, but unto life, a sicknesse that never ends but in comfort and satisfaction, blessed are those that hunger and thirst after Christ, they shall be satisfied, as we shall see afterwards more at large.

Knowledge gives not the denomination, *for we may know ill and be good, and we may know good and be evill;* but it is the affection of the soule, which cleaves to the things known, the truth of our love is that gives the denomination of a state to be good or ill; love is the weight and wing of the soule, which carries it where it goes, which if it carry us to earth we are base and earthly, if to heaven, heavenly; we should have especiall care how we fixe this affection; for thereafter as it is,

SER. XIII.

Gen. 34. 24.

A& 6.

That this sicknesse of divine love works also upon the body.
Psal. 32. 3.

Mat. 5. 6.

It is not our knowledge that makes us good or evill, but goodness loved and cleaved to makes us to be so.

SER. XIIII.

even so is our condition, Askethy love of what city thou art, whether of Ierusalem or of Babylon (as Austin saith) Now the daughters of Ierusalem reply unto the Church wondring at her earnestnesse.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved that thou dost so charge us?

Instead of giving satisfaction to her, they reply with asking new Questions, *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou fairest among women ? what is thy Beloved, &c.* Wherein ye have a doubling of the Question, to shew the seriousnesse of it; of this their answer there are two parts.

1. *A loving and sweet Compellation, O thou fairest among women.*

2. *The Question doubled, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved And againe, What is thy Beloved, &c, that thou dost so charge us, as if they should say, Thou layest a serious charge upon us, therefore there is some great matter surely in thy Beloved, that thou makest such enquiry after him.* Thus the weaker Christians being stirred up by the example of the stronger, they make this Question, and are thus inquisitive ; but to speake of them in their order.

O thou fairest among women, here is the compellation, the Church is the fairest among women in the judgement of Christ, so he calls her, *Cant. I.*

8. *O thou fairest among women ;* and here the fellow members of the Church tearme her so too, faire and the fairest, incomparably faire.

But how commeth she to be thus faire ?

It is in regard that she is cloathed with Christ's robes, Rev. 12. there is a woman mentioned, cloathed with the Sunne: We were all innobled with the image of God at the first ; but after we had sinned, we were bereft of that Image ; therefore now all our beauty must be cloathing, which is not naturall to man but artificiall, fethered from other things, our beauty now is borrowed, it is not connatural with us, the beauty of the Church now comes from the head of the Church Christ, she shines in the beames of her husband; not onely in Iustification, but in Sanctification also.

The Church is lovely and faire againe, as from Christ's imputative righteousness, so from his righteousnesse inherent in her, the graces she hath from him; for of him we receive Grace for Grace, there is never a Grace but it is beautifull and faire ; for what is Grace but the beames of Christ the Son of Righteousnesse, so that all must be faire that comes from the first faire, all beautifull that comes from the first beauty.

This beauty of Grace, whereby it makes the Church so faire springs from these grounds.

First, In that it is from a divine principle and originall, it is not basely bred, but from Heaven, and therefore it raiseth the soule above nature, and makes the subjects wherein it is as faire surpassee all other men as men doe beasts.

Secondly, In regard of the continuance, it is everlasting and makes us continue for ever. *All flesh*

SER. XIII.

Quest
Answ.

I.
The Church is faire in regard she is cloathed with Christ.

2.
In regard of the graces she bath from Christ she shines.

i.

2.

SER.XIII. *flesh is grasse, and as the flower of grasse* (saith the Prophet) and it is repeated in the New Testament in divers places. All worldly excellency is as the flower of grasse, *The grasse withereth and the flower fadeth, but the word of the Lord* (that is, the grace that is imprinted in the soule by the Spirit with the Word) *that abideth for ever*, and makes us abide likewise.

1 Pet 1.24.

Use.

*That Christ is
the most excellent husband.*

From this fairenesse of the Church, let us take occasion to contemplate of the excellency of Christ that puts this lustre of beauty upon the Church. Moses married a woman that was not beautifull, but could not alter the complection and condition of his Spouse. But Christ doth, he takes us wallowing in our bloud, deformed and defiled, hee is such a husband as can put his Church into his own disposition, and transforme her into his owne proportion. He is such a Head as can quicken his members, such a root as instils life into all his branches; such a foundation as makes us living stones, there is a vertue and power in this husband above all.

Obiect.

Answ.

I.

*In what regard
the Church calls
her selfe blacke.*

2.

But she is blacke?

She is so indeed, and she confesseth her selfe to be so, *Cant. 1.5.* I am black but comely, blacke in regard of the afflictions and persecutions of others she meets with in this world.

Blacke againe, *In regard of scandals*, for the Devill hates the Church more then all societies in the world; therefore in the society of the Church there are often more scandals then in other people, as the Apostle tells the *Corinthians*, there

there was incest among them, the like was not among the heathen.

She is black through the envy of the world, that looks more at the Churches faults then vertues.

The Church is blacke and unlovely, nothing differing from others. In regard of Gods outward dealing, All fals alike to all, they are sicke and deformed, they have all things outwardly whatsoever is common with others.

Lattly and principally she is blacke, *In respect of her infirmities and weaknesses*, subject to weaknesse and passions as other men; the beauty of the Church is inward and undiscerned to the carnall eye altogether : the Scribes and Pharisees see no vertue in Christ himselfe. It is said, that he came among his owne, and his owne could not discerne of him ; the darknesse could not comprehend that light.

Now as it was with Christ, so it is much more with the Church, let this then be the use of it.

Oppose this state of the Church to the false judgement of the world: they see all blacke, and nothing else that is good ; Christ seeth that which is black too ; but then his Spirit in them (together with the sight of their blacknesse) seeth their beauty too. *I am blacke but comely, &c.* Be not discouraged therfore at the censure of the world, blind men cannot judge of colours. It is said of Christ, *he had no forme or beauty in him when we shall see him.*

1. Not in outward glory, nor in the view of the world. If wee be therefore thought to bee blacke, we are no otherwise thought of then

SER.XIII.

3.

1 Cor. 5.
How the Churc-
ches state in
this life comes
to be so full of
scandals.

4.

Eccl. 9.2.

5.

Ioh. 1.11.

Use 1.
Oppose Judge-
ment to Judge-
ment.

Isa. 53.

SER.XIII.

Use 3.

To remember
Christ's judg-
ment of the
Church when
we are under
temptation.

the Church and Christ hath been before us.

Againe, Let us make this Use of it, *against Satan in the time of temptation*, doth Christ thinke us faire for the good we have? doth he not altogether value us by our ill? and shall we beleeve Satan, who joynes with the distempers of melancholy, or weaknessse we are in, which he useth as a weapon against the soule, to make us thinke otherwise, *Satan is not only a murtherer, but a lyar from the beginning*. We must not beleieve an enemy, and a lyar withall. But consider how Christ and the Church judgeth, that have better discerning, *And let us beware we be not Satans to our selves*: For if there were no Devill, yet in the time of temptation and desertion we are subject to discouragement, to give false witnesse against our selves, we are apt to looke on the darke side of the Cloud. The Cloud that went before the Israelites had a double aspect, one darke, the other light; In temptation we looke on the darke side of the soule, and are witty in pleading against our selves. O but consider what Christ judgeth of us, *O thou fairest among women*, and what those about us that are learned, who can read our evidences better then we our selves, doe judge of us, let us trust the judgement of others in time of temptation more then our owne.

Use 5.

To see the bit-
ternesse of their
spirits that can
or will see no
good in Gods
Children.

Simile.

Learne againe here, *What to judge of the spirits of such kind of men, as are all in disgracing and defacing the poore Church*, their table talke is of the infirmities of Christians, they light upon them as flies doe upon sore places, and will see nothing that

Exod.14.20.

Simile.

that is good in them. O where is the Spirit of Christ, or of the Church of Christ in them that thus bescratch the face of the Church: when yet (oft times) their hearts tell them these poore despised ones will be better then themselves one day; for grace shall have the upper hand of all excellencies.

The Church is faire and fairest, Grace is a transcendent good, all the excellency of civility and morality is nothing to this, this denominates the Church the fairest, she is not guilt, but pure gold; not painted, but hath a true naturall compleetion, all other excellencies are but guilt, painted excellencies. The whore of Babylon she is wondrous faire. But wherein doth her beauty consist? In ornaments and ceremonies to abuse silly people, that goe no further then fancy, it is an excellency that comes not to the judgement, but the excellency of the Church is otherwise, she is *The fairest among women*, she hath a naturall fairenesse; as gold is pure gold, so the Church is of a pure composition, glorious within. It is for the false whorish Church to be glorious without only, but the true Church is glorious within: But that which we should especially observe, is, *That we should labour to answer this commendation, not only to be faire, but the fairest, to be transcendently singularly good, to doe somewhat more then others can, to have somewhat more in us then others have.*

For it is answerable to the state of a Christian, is a Christian in an excellent ranke above other

That all other excellencies save grace are but painted excellencies.

Obser.

That this strife for eminency in grace is suitable to a Christians calling.

SER.XIII.

men? let him shew it by a carriage more gracious, more fruitfull and plentifull in good works. There is a kind of excellency affected in other things, much more should we desire to be excellent in that which is good, that we may not be faire only but the fairest. This the Apostle Saint Paul excellently presseth to *Titus* his Scholler, *Tit. 2.14.* and to all of us in other places, that we should be, *A peculiar people zealous of good works;* not onely to doe them, but to be zealous of them, and to goe before others in them, standing as stander-bearers. Therefore those that think they may goe too farre in Religion, that they may be too fruitfull, are not worthy the name of the Spouse of Christ, for she is faire, yea the fairest among women: *The righteous is more excellent then his neighbour;* therefore we should excell in good works (as the Apostle exhorts us) *to labour after things that are excellent;* as if he should say, Is there any thing better then other, labour for that. You have some so far from this disposition, that they cry downe the excellencies of others, least the fairenesse of others might discover their blacknesse. Thus we leave the *Compellation* and come to the *Question.*

Quest.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved? and they double it, *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, that thou so chargest us?*

Questions are of divers natures, we shall not stand upon them, this is not a *Question* merely of ignorance (for they had some knowledge of Christ, though weake) Nor was it a curious nor a catching

That it is a full sluggish feare to feare to be religioum.

¹ Cor 12.32.

² Pet. 1.8.

catching Question, like those of the Scribes and Pharisees unto Christ, to instance in that of Pilat, *What is truth?* when Christ had told him the truth, *What is truth?* (saith he) in a scornfull prophane manner, as indeed prophane spirits cannot heare favourly words, but they turne them off with scorne, *what is truth?* This here in the Text is not such, but a Question tending to further resolution and satisfaction, *What is thy Beloved more than another Beloved?*

S E R . XIII.
Ioh.18.38.

First of all observe, That these of the Church here were stirred up by the examples of other members of the Church to be inquisitive after Christ, so to be satisfied. Hence observe, *That there is a wondrous force in the examples of Christians to stirre up one another.* We see here when the Church was sicke of love, the other part of the members began to think what is the reason the Church is so earnest to seek after Christ, there is some excellency sure in him; for, *wise men doe not use great motions in little matters, great things are carried with great movings;* we use not to stirre up tragedies for trifles, to make mountaines of mole-hils, the endeavours and carriages of great persons that be wise, judicious and holy, are answerable to the nature of things. And indeed the Church judgeth aright in this; then see the force of good example, any man that hath his wits about him, when he sees other serious, earnest and carefull about a thing whereof for the present he can see no reason (especially if they have parts equal or superior to himselfe) will reason thus presently.

Observ.

What

SER. XIII.
A reasoning
upon others
earnestnesse.

What is the matter that such an one is so earnest, so carefull, watchfull, laborious, inquisitive? Is it not for want of wit? surely he hath parts enough, he understandeth himselfe well. And then he beginneth to think, sure I am too cold, hereupon comes competition and corrivalitie: surely I will be as good as he.

Use.
To be exempla-
ry for good to
others.

Let us labour therefore to be exemplary to others, and to expresse the graces of God; for thus we shall doe more then we are aware, there is a secret influence in good example, though a man say nothing (saith one) there is a way to profit from a good man though hee hold his peace, his course of life speaks loud enough, we owe this to all, even to them that are without, to doe them so much good as to give them a good example, and we wrong them when we doe not, and hinder their comming on by an evill, or a dead example.

A debt to those
that are with-
out.
That answer-
ble to the good
we shall doe to
others, shall be
our comfort in
life and death.

Let this be one motive to stirre us upto it, That answerable to the good we should doe in this kind, shall be our comfort in life and death, and our reward after death. For the more spreading our good is, either in word, life, or conversation, the more our consciences shall be settled in the consideration of a good life well spent, our reward shall be answerable to our communication and diffusion of good; and whereas otherwise it will lie heavy on the conscience, not onely in this life, but at the day of judgement and after, when we shall think not only of the personall ill that we stand guilty of, but exemplary ill also.

That wee shall
not only answer
for our knowl-
edge, but also
for all the good
examples and
helps we have
had and neg-
lected.

It should move those therfore of inferiour sort to look

to all good examples, as the Church here to the love of the other part of the Church. Wherfore are examples among us, but that we should follow them? we shall not onely be answerable for abuse of knowledge, but also of good examples we have had and neglected. Doth God kindle lights for us, and shall not we walke by their light? It is a sin not to consider the *Sun*, the *Moon*, the *Stars*, the *Heavens*, and works of *Nature* and *Providence*, much more not to consider the *Works of Grace*. But one place of Scripture shall close up all, which is, *Rom. 11.11*. That the example of us *Gentiles* at length shall stirre up and provoke the *Jewes* to beleeve. To those stiffe-necked *Jewes* example shall be so forcible, that it shall prevaile with them to beleeve and to be converted. If example be of such force as to convert the *Jewes* that are so far off, how much more is it or should it be to convert *Christians*, wondrous is the force of good example. So we come to the Question it selfe.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, &c.

We see there is excellent use of holy conference, the Church comming to the *daughters of Jerusalem*, speaking of Christ her Beloved, that she is *sick of Love*, &c. The *daughters of Jerusalem* are inquisitive to know Christ more and more. Here is the benefit of holy conference and good speeches, one thing drawes on another, and that drawes on another, till at length the soule be warmed and kindled with the consideration and me-

Simile.

S E R . X I I I .
*That in dealing
and speaking of
heavenly things
a little thing is
the beginning of
great matters.*

*That holy con-
ference is good
for others and
our selves.*

2.

2 KIA 5.

Phil. 1.

*Exhortation to
fruitfull con-
ference.*

meditation of heavenly things. That that is little in the beginning may bring forth great matters. This Question to the Church, and talking with her, *I charge you if you find my Beloved, to tell him that I am sicke of Love, breeds Questions in others, What is thy Beloved, &c.* Whence upon the description of her Beloved, her heart is kindled, she findeth her Beloved, so that talking of holy and heavenly things is good for others, and our selves also. *It is good for others, as it was good for the daughters of Ierusalem here, for therupon they are stirred up to be inquisitive after Christ, and it was good for the Church her selfe; for here-upon she tooke occasion to make a large commendation of Christ, wherein she found much comfort.*

Good conference then is good for our selves, for we see a little seed brings forth at length a great tree, a little fire kindleth much fewell, and great things many times rise out of small despised beginnings. It was a little occasion which *Naman the Assyrian* had to effect his conversion. There was a poore banished woman, a stranger, who was a Lewish maid-servant, she told her Lords servants that there was a Prophet in Iury that could heale him: whereupon he came thither, and was converted and healed. And *Paul sheweth, that the very report of his bonds did a great deale of good in Cæsars house.* Report and fame is a little matter, but little matters make way for the greater.

This may put us in mind to spend our time fruitfully

fully in good conference, when in d scration it is seasonable : we know not when we begin, where we may make an end ? our soules may be carri'd up to Heavē before we are aware; for the Spirit will enlarge it selfe from one thing to another. To him that hath shall be given more and more still. God graciously seconds good beginnings. We see the poore Disciples, when they were in a damp for the losse of Christ, after he comes, meets them, and talks of holy things. In that very conference, their hearts were warmed and kindled: For, next to Heaven it selfe our meeting together here, it is a kind of Paradice , the greatest pleasure in the world is to meet with those here, whom we shall ever live with in Heaven. Those who are good should not spend such opportunities fruitlessly.

And to this end, labour for the graces of the Communion of Saints ; for there is such a state, we beleeve it as an Article of our Creed. How shall we approve our selves to be such as have interest unto the communion of Saints, unlesse we have spirits able to communicate good to others? pitifull and loving spirits that we may speake a word in due season.

What a world of precious time is spent in idle conversing, as if the time were a burthen, and no improvement to be made of the good parts of others ? sometimes though we know that which we aske of others as well as they doe ; yet notwithstanding good speeches will draw us to know it better, by giving occasion to speak more

Mat. 23.

Luk. 24. 32.

That graces
serving the
communion of
Saints is a
great help to
conference.

of

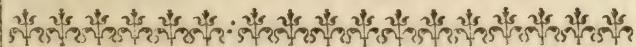
SER.XIII.

of it, wherewith the Spirit works more effectually and imprints it deeper : So that it shall be a more rooted knowledge then before. For that *doth good that is graciously knowne, and that is graciously knowne that the Spirit seales upon our soules.* Perhaps the knowledge I have is not yet sealed sufficiently, it is not rooted by conference, though I heare the same things againe, yet I may heare them in a fresh manner, and so I may have it sealed deeper then before, experience finds these things to be true.

*That Christians
should be in-
quisitive.*

Againe, *We should labour here to have our hearts inquisitive.* The heathen man accounted it a grace in his scholler, and a signe that he would prove hopefull, because he was full of *Questions.* Christians should be inquisitive of the *wayes of Righteousnesse;* Inquisitive of the right path which leads to Heaven, how to carry themselves in private in their families, how in all estates, Inquisitive of the excellency of Christ : *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved?* *Questions end usually in resolutions;* for the soule will not rest but in satisfaction. Rest is the happiness of the soule as it were, when a Question is moved it will not be quiet till it have satisfaction ; therefore *doubting at the first, breeds resolution at the last.* It is good therefore to raise Questions of the practise of all necessary points, and to improve the good parts and gifts of others that we converse with, to give satisfaction. What an excellent improvement is this of communion and Company, when nothing troubles our spirit, but we may have satisfaction

faction from others upon our proposing it. Perhaps God hath laid up in the parts of others satisfaction to our soules, and hath so determined that we shall be perplexed and vexed with scruples, til we have recourse to some whom he hath appointed to be helpfull to us in this kind. Many goe mourning a great part of their daies in a kind of sullennesse this way, because that they do not open their estate to others. You see here the contrary practise of the Church, she doubles the Question, *What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, that thou doest so charge us?*



The fourteenth Sermon.

CANT. V. IX. X.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, O thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved, that thou doest so charge us?

My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thousand.

He last time we met, we left the Church sicke of Love: which strange affection in her, together with her passionate charge to

SER. XIV.

to the daughters of Jerusalem, moved them to make this Question unto her, *What is thy Beloved morethen another Beloved, &c.* To be in love is much; to conceale it is grievous; to vent it with such fervency and passion breeds astonishment in these younger Christians, who wonder what that is which can so draw away the Churches love, and run away with her affections. They knew no such excellencies of the person the Church so admired, and therefore they double the Question unto her, *What is thy Beloved, &c. what is thy Beloved, &c.* Whereby we see the excellency of the soule which aspires still towards perfecti-
on, not resting in any state inferiour to the most excellent. Therefore also is the Churches sick-
nesse of love here, who desires a nearer union and communion with Christ then she at this time had.

For there are degrees of spirituall languishing, till we be in Heaven we are alway under some degree of this sicknesse of love; though the soule have more communion at one time then at another. Ye the Angels are under this wish, to see Christ together with his Church in full perfe-
ction, so that untill we be in Heaven, where shall be a perfect re-union of soule and body, and of all the members of the Church together, there is a kind of sicknesse attending upon the Church, and a languishing.

The Question asked is,

*What is thy Beloved morethen another Beloved,
O thou fairest among women?*

What!

What ! now faire when her *vaile* was taken away: now faire when the *Watchmen* abased her; now faire when she was disgraced ? Yes, now faire and now faire, in the sight of the *daughters of Jerusalem*, and in the sight of Christ that calls her *the fairest among women*: So that under all disgraces, infirmities and scandals, under all the shame that riseth in the soule upon sin, under all these clouds there is an excellency of the Church, she is, *The fairest among women*, notwithstanding all these : *O thou fairest among women*.

SER.XIV.

Whence comes this fairenesse under such seeming foulenesse and disgrace?

It comes from without, it is borrowed beauty, as you have it, *Ezek. 16. 1,2.* By nature we lie in our bloud, there must be a beauty put upon us, we are faire with the beauty that we have out of Christs wardrobe. The Church shines in the beames of Christs Righteousesse, shee is not borne thus faire, but new borne fairer. The Church of Christ is all-glorious, but it is within, not seen of the world, she hath a life, but it is a hidden life, *Our glory and our life is hidden in Christ* : It is hid sometimes from the Church it selfe, who sees onely her deformity and not her beauty; her death, but not her life, because her life is hid. Here is a mystery of Religion, *The Church is never more faire then when she judgeth her selfe to be most deformed*; *Never more happy then when she judgeth her selfe to be miserable*; *Never more strong then when she feeles her selfe to be weake*; *Never more righteous then when she feeles her selfe to be*

Quest

Answ.

*That Grace
only makes us
lovely to Christ.
Psal 45.
Col. 3.*

*That the Church
is never more
faire in Christ's
eye, then when
she sees & com-
plaines most of
her deformities.
2 Cor. 12.*

S E R . X I V .
That the sence
of one contrary
forceth another.
2 Cor. 12. 16.

most burthened with the guilt of her owne sinnes, because the sence of one contrary forceth to another; the sence of ill forceth us to the fountaine of good, to have supply thence: *When I am weake then am I strong* (saith Paul) Grace and strength is perfect in weaknesse.

Use.
What to judge
of the Church
and Gods peo-
ple under see-
ming disgraces.

Heb. 12. 22.

Simile.

That the cause
why wicked
men see not this
beauty, is be-
cause they looke
on Gods thorugh
the spectacles of
malice.

Job 1.

This should teach us what to judge of the Church and people of God, even under their seeming disgraces, yet to judge of them as the excellentest people in the world, *Psal. 16. All my delight is in those that are excellent*, to joyne our selves to them; Especially this is here to be understood of the Church as it is the mystical body of Christ, not as a mixed body, as a visible Church, *but as it is the Temple of the Holy Ghost.*

The visible Church hath tearmes of excellency put upon it sometimes, but it is in regard of the better part. As gold unrefined is called gold, because gold is the better part: And a heap of wheat unwinnowed is called wheat, though there be much chaffe in it, the body of Christ it self hath alwayes excellent tearmes given it, *O thou fairest among women.*

Those that looke upon the Church with the spectacles of malice can see no such beauty in her, though to espy our faults, as the Devill could in Job, to quarrell, to slander, they are quicksighted enough; but we see here the Church in the judgement of the daughters of Jerusalem, that she is the fairest among women.

The Papists have a painted beauty for their

Ca-

Catholique Church, but here is no such beauty. It becomes a whore to be painted, to be as faire as her hands can make her, with faigned beauty. But the Church of Christ hath a beauty from her husband, a reall, spirituall beauty, not discerned of the world.

This should be of use to Gods children themselves, *to help them in the upbraiding of conscience* (as if they had no goodness in them) because they have a great deale of ill. Christians should have a double eye, one to set and fixe upon that which is ill in them, to humble them, and another upon that which is supernaturally gracious in them, to encourage themselves: They should looke upon themselves as Christ lookes upon them, and judge of themselves as he judgeth of them by the better part. He looks not so much what ill we have; for, *that shall be wrought out by little and little, and be abolished, it is condemned already, and it shall be executed by little and little till it be wholly abolished*: But he looks upon us in regard of the better part, so should we looke upon our selves, though otherwhiles upon our blacke feet (our infirmities) when we are tempted to pride and haughtinesse; but always let the mean thoughts we conceive of our selves, make us to flie to Christ.

What is thy Beloved more then another Beloved?

Here is a Question, and a Question answered with a Question: Questions they breed knowledge (as the Greeke Proverbe is) *doubtings breed resolution*. Whereupon the inquisitive soule usu-

Use
That Christians
in the upbrai-
dings of con-
science should look
upon the good as
on the ill in
them.

That we should
looke upon our
selves as Christ
looks upon us.

SER. XIV.

Ier. 50.

*That is a speci-
al point of wis-
dom to improve
the gifts of o-
ther by questi-
ons.*

ally proves the most learned, judicious and wise soule ; therefore that great Philosopher counted it as a vertue amongst his Schollers, that they would be inquisitive : So the Schollers of Righteousnesse are inquisitive, *they enquire the way to Canaan, and the way to Zion with their faces thitherwards.*

It is a speciall part of Christians wisedome to improve the excellency of others by Questions, to have a Bucket to draw out of the deep Wels of others (as Solomon saith) *The heart of a wise man is as deep waters, but a man of understanding can tell how to fetch those waters out.* There be many men of deep and excellent parts which are lost in the world, because men know not how to improve them ; therefore it is good while we have men excellent in any kind, to make use of them. It is an honour to God as well as a commodity to our selves. Doth God suffer lights to shine in the world, that we should take no notice of them ? It is a wrong to our selves, and a dishonour to God.

*What is thy Beloved more then another Belo-
ved, &c.*

Obseru.

A further point from hence is, *That if we would give encouragement to others to repaire to us for any good, we should labour to be so excellent as to adorn Religion.*

*O thou fairest among women, what is thy Belo-
ved, &c.* They enquire of her because they have a good conceit of her : a world of good might be done, if there were bred a good conceit of

of men in otheris; we say in sicknesse, *a good conceit of the Physician is halfe the cure*: so in teaching, a good conceit of the teacher is halfe the learning: *The daughters of Ierusalem had a good conceit here in the questioning of the Church, O thou fairest among women, what is thy Beloved more then another Beloved?*

Let us labour therfore to be such as may bring honour and credit to Religion, and make it lovely, that what we doe may make otheris thinke we doe what we doe to great purpose, which is oft times a speciall meanes and occasion of their conversion. Though properly the cause of conversion be the Spirit of God in the ordinances; yet the inducement (many times) and occasion, is the obseruation of the course and carriage of those that excell and are knowne to be eminent in parts and in graces, *Emulation adds spurs to the soule.* Doe they take such courses that are wiser then I, and shall not I take the like course too? *Paul saith, the emulation of the Gentiles shall be a meanes of the conversion of the Iewes,* when they shall see them imbrace Christ, they will be encouraged to doe so also: what shall we thinke therefore of them that live so as that they bring an evill report, scandall and reproach upon Religion? Great and fearefull is their wickednesse, that by their ill conversation like *Hophny and Phineas discredit the crdinances of the Lord.*

Now the Church thus answers the former Question touching Christ, *My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand.* She is not afraid

That our endeavours must be to make Religion lovely.

Rom. 11.11.

1 Sam. 2.17.

SER. XIV.

That there is no rivalry in spiritual things where is abundance for all of love.

to set out her Beloveds beauty; for there is no envy in spirituall things : It is want of wisedome amongst men to commend a thing that is very lovely to others, and so to set an edge upon their affections, when they cannot both share ; and the more one hath , the lesse another hath of all things here below : But in spirituall things there is no envy at the sharing of others in that we love our selves, because all may be loved alike: Christ hath grace and affection enough for all his ; he hath not (as Esau speaks) but one blessing : No, he can make all his happy. Therefore the Church stands not upon tearmes, when the daughters of Ierusalem enquire about her Beloved, I tell you freely sayes she what my Beloyed is : First in generall the answer is, *My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand*; then afterwards there is a specification of the particulars, she will not stand upon the grosse, but admires at every parcell in the thing beloved, every thing is lovely , as wee shall see in particular afterwards.

My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

We will take that which is safe, because we will have sure footing (as near as we can) in this mystical portion of Scripture. What is that white and ruddy ? why doth the Church set forth the spirituall excellencies of Christ by that which is most outwardly excellent and most beautiful ?

Because of all complections the mixed complexion of these two colours, white and ruddy, is

Quest.

Answ.

is the purest and the best, therefore she sets out the beauty and the Spirituall excellency of Christ by this *white* and *ruddy*, beauty ariseth of the mixture of these two. First she sets out the beauty of Christ positively, and then by way of comparison, *The chiefeſt among ten thouſand.*

But what is this *white* and *ruddy*? what is beauty?

To the making up of beauty there is required a sound healthy constitution, so as the particulars have a due proportion, there must be a harmony of the parts, one suiting with another; for *comeliſſe* stands in *onenesse*, when many things (as it were) are one. *Uncomeliſſe* is in *diverſity*, when divers things are jumbled together that belong to many heads: as we say it is uncomely to have an old mans head on a young mans shoulders; but when all things are so suited that they make one agreeing exactly there is beauty and comeliſſe.

Besides soundneſſe of conſtitution and come-
liſſe of proportion, there is a grace of colour that maketh beauty, which ariseth out of the other, so that *soundneſſe and goodneſſe of conſtitution, toge-*
ther with the exact proportion of the variety of parts,
having with it this gracefulness of colour and com-
plection makes up that which we call beauty. In a word, then this carnation colour, *white* and *ruddy*, may be understood of that excellent and sweet mixture that makes such a gracefulness in Christ, in him there is wonderfull purity and ho-

What beauty is,
and wherein it
consiſteth.

1.
Proportion and
feature.

2.
In the grace of
colour.

The ſtrange
and admirable
mixture in
Christ.

S.B.R.XIV.

linesse, and yet a wonderfull weaknesse, there is God, the great God, and a piece of earth, of flesh in one person, a bloudy pierced, and a glorious shining body, humility and glory : Iustice, wonderfull iustice, and yet exceeding love and mercy ; Iustice to his enemies, Mercy to his Children.

Observe.

In what regard
Christ was most
beauitfull.

That the loveliness and beauty
of Christ must
be spiritually
considered.

Christ is a most beautifull Person.

Not as God only but as man, the Mediator God and man ; the Person of the Mediator is a beautifull Person ; as *Psal. 45.* there is a notable description of Christ, and of his Church, *Thou art fairer then the children of men, grace is powred into thy lips, &c.*

But the loveliness and beauty of Christ is especially spirituall, in regard of the graces of his Spirit. A deformed person, man or woman, of a homely complection and constitution, yet notwithstanding when we discerne them by their conversation to be very wise, and of a lovely and sweet spirit, very able, and withall wondrous willing to impart their abilities, being wondrous usefull, what a world of love doth it breed, though wee see in their outward man nothing lovely. The consideration of what sufficiency is in Christ, *wisedome, power, goodnesse and love,* that made him come from Heaven to Earth, to take our nature upon him, to marry us and joyn our natures to his (that he might joyn us to him in spirituall bonds) the consideration of his *meekenesse and gentlenesse,* how he never turned any backe againe that came to him, should make us highly prize him : Indeed some went backe of them-

themselves (as the young man in discontent) Christ turned them not backe; nay he loved the appearance of goodnesse in the young man, and embrased him. He is of so sweet a nature, that he never upbraided those that followed him with their former sinnes; as Peter with deniall, and the like. He is of so gracious a nature, that he tooke not notice of petty infirmities in his Disciples, but tels them of the danger of those sinnes that might hurt them, being of so sweet a nature, that *he will not quench the smoaking flax, nor breake the bruised reed*, his whole life being nothing but a doing of good, *He did all things well* (as the Gospell speaks) excellent well.

Now the consideration of what a gracious Spirit is in Christ, must needs be a loadstone of love, and make him beautifull. Therefore Bernard saith well, *When I thinke of Christ, I thinke at once of God, full of majesty and glory, and at the same time of Man, full of meeknesse, gentlenesse and sweetnesse.* So let us consider of Christ as of the Mighty God, powerfull; and withall consider of him as a gentle and mild man, that came riding meekly on an Asse (as the Scripture sets him out) He was for all commers, and gave entertainment to all, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, &c.* For the most weake and miserable person of all had the sweetest entertainment of him, *He came to seeke and to save that which was lost.* Let us I say thinke of him both as of the great God, and withall as of a meek Man; the one to establish our soules, that he is able to doe great matters;

Isa. 42.

Mat. 21.

Mat. 11. 28.

Luk 16. 10.

SER. XIV.

Heb. 12.

ters; the other to draw us to him because he loves us. We are afraid to goe to God a consuming fire, but now let us think we goe to bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh, to our brother, to one that out of his goodnesse abased himselfe of purpose that we might be one with him, who loved us more then his owne life, and was contented to carry the curse for us that we might be blessed of God for ever, and to suffer a most painfull and shamefull death, that so he might make us heires of everlasting life.

Simile. Christ is spiritually lovely, the chiefest of ten thousand. The Church sets him out by comparison, a standard-bearer, a carrier of the banner of ten thousand : For, as the goodliest men use to carry the Ensigne, the Banner, so he the goodliest of all other is the standard-bearer.

Observ. Whence we gather, That Christ as he is beautifull and good, so he is incomparably beyond all comparison good ; He is a standard-bearer, one among ten thousand, annoynted with the oyle of gladnesse above his fellowes.

Psal. 45. 7.
In regard o' the
personall union
with the God-
head in our na-
ture, Christ is
the chiefe of all.
In regard all
our uenes comes
from Christ, he
is the chiefe
of all.

Simile.

First, for that he is so near to God by the personall union.

And in regard likewise, That all others have all from him ; of his fulnesse we receive grace for grace, ours is but a derivative fulnesse, his glory and shinning is as the shining of the body of the Sun, ours as the light of the Aire, which is derived from the glory of the Sun ; ours is but the fulnesse of the stremme, and of the vessell, but the fulnesse of the fountaine and of the spring is his ; thereupon

he

he is called *the head of the Church*; the head is the tower of the body which hath all the five ſenses in it, and wiſedom for the whole body. It feeth, heareth, understandeth, and doth all for the body, having influence into the other parts of it: So Christ is above all, and hath influence into all his Church, not onely eminencie, but influence.

What is excellent in the Heavens? *the Sunne,*
So Christ is the Sunne of Righteouſneſſe: *the Starres?*
He is the bright morning Starre: *the Light?* *He is the*
Light of the world. Come to all Creatures, you
have not any excellent amongst them but
Christ is ſtiled from it: *He is the Lyon of the tribe*
of Iuda, *the Lilly and the Rose,* and *the Lambe of*
God that taketh away the ſinnes of the world, *the Tree*
of Life, &c. There is not a thing neceſſary to
nature, but you have a ſtyle from it given to
Christ, to ſhew that he is as neceſſary as *Bread*
and *Water,* and the food of life. When we ſee
Light therefore, thinke of the true *Light*: when
the *Sunne,* thinke of the *Sunne of Righteouſneſſe:*
ſo remember *the bread and water of life* in our
common food; therefore the Sacraments were
ordained, that as we goe to the ſea by the con-
duct of rivers, ſo we might goe to the ſea of all
excellency and goodneſſe by the conduct of
these rivers of goodneſſe, to be led by every ex-
cellency in the creature to that of our Medi-
ator Christ, who is *the chiefeſt among ten thou-*
ſand.

To come more particularly to ſpeak of his

S.B.R. XIV.
Col. 1.18.

That Christ is
ſet forth by all
earthly excel-
lencies.

Mal. 4. 2.

Ioh 6.
Joh. 4.

Simile.

That Christ on-
ly was King,
Priest, and
Prophet.

ex-

SER.XIV.

1.
A King.

excellencies, omitting his two Natures in one Person God and Man; that we may consider his Offices, a King, Priest, and Prophet : He being the chiefe in all these, so all good Kings before him were types of him, as also the Prophets and Priests, he was all in one. Never any before him was King, Priest, and Prophet, as he was King, Priest, and Prophet in one, so in every respect he was incomparable above all. Such a King, as is King of Kings, and subdueth things unconquerable to all other Kings, even the greatest enemies of all, such a King as conquered the World, Death, Hell, and Sinne, all things that are terrible: Death you know is called the King of feares, because it terrifieth even Kings themselves. Christ is such a King as takes away these terrible greatest ills of all: Such a King as rules over the soule and conscience (the best part of man) where he settles and stablisheth peace: Such a King as sets up his Kingdome in our very soules and hearts, guides our thoughts, desires, actions, and affectiōns, setting up a peaceable government there: so he is an incomparable King even in regard of that Office, He is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand, such a King as carriesthe government upon his owne shoulders ; as it is, Isa 9.6. He devolves not the care to another to make it as he list, and so be a cypher himselfe, but he carries all upon his owne shoulder, he needs not a Pope for his Vicar.

2.
A Priest.

Againe, as a Priest, such a High-priest as offered himselfe a sacrifice by his Eternall Spirit : He as
God

God offered up his *Man-hood*, such a Priest as hath satisfied the wrath of God, and reconciled God to Man. All other Priests were but types of this Priest, who is such a Priest as never dyes, but lives for ever to make intercession for us in Heaven, by vertue of that sacrifice which he offred in the dayes of his flesh : He was both Priest and Sacrifice, such a Priest as is touched with our infirmities, so mild and gentle, full of pitty and mercy. No Priest to this Priest, God only smelt a sweet smell from this sacrifice.

And for his Propheticall Office, he is a Prophet beyond all others, such a one as can instruct the soule : Other men can propound doctrines, but he can open the understanding, and hath the key of the heart, the key of David which can open the soule, by his holy Spirit he can make the very simple full of knowledge; such a Prophet as hath his chaire in the very heart of man, this great Bishop of our soules, the Angell of the Covenant, that *now* is, the messenger of the Father : so he is the chief of ten thousand ; consider him as King, as Priest, or as Prophet.

The use of this is exceeding pregnant, comfortable and large, that we have such a Saviour, such an eminent person, so near, so peculiar to us. Our Beloved, my Beloved : If he were a Beloved the chief of ten thousand, it were no great matter, but he is mine, he is thus excellent ; excellent considered with propriety in it, and a peculiar propriety; peculiarity and propriety together with transcendent excellency makes happy, if there be any enjoying of

3.
A Prophet.

Luk. 24.

Prov. 1.

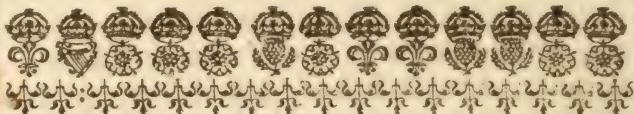
1 Pet. 2. 25.
Acyds.

Use.

Happines what
of

The chiefest among ten thousand.

of it. Therefore repent not your selves of your repentings, but thinke I have not cast away my love, but have set it upon such an object as deserves it, *for my Beloved is the chiefest of ten thousand.*

**The fifteenth Sermon.**

C A N T . V . X .

My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

Love is such a boundlesse affection, that where it once breaks forth in praises upon a good foundation, it knowes no measure, as we see here in the Church, who being provoked, and (as it were) exasperated by the *daughters of Jerusalem*, to explaine the excellency of him shee had with so much affection incessantly sought after, That she might justifie her choice (ere she descend into particulars) she breaks forth into this generall description of her Beloved, whereby she cuts off from all hopes of equalling him, *My Beloved is white and ruddy (exceeding faire) nay, the chiefe among ten thousand (none like him).*

him) she would not have us thinke she had bestowed her love but on the most excellent of all, *the chiefe of ten thousand*. Well were it for us that we could doe so in our love, that we might be able to justifie our choice, not to spend it on sinfull, vaine and unprofitable things, which cause repentance & mourning in the conclusion, wher-of the Church here worthily cleareth her self, in that she had chosen *the chiefe among ten thousand*.

And most justly did she place her affections upon so excellent an object, who was so full of *all the treasures of wisedome and knowledge, the life of our life, in whom dwelt all the fulnesse of the God-head bodily*, in whom was a gracious mixture and compound of all heavenly graces, where Greatnesse and Goodnesse, Justice and Mercy, God and Man meet in one Person. Such an one who breaks no braised reed, nor quenches the smoaking flax, who refuses not sinners, but invites them unto him, offering to heale all and cure all who come unto him: He is a King indeed; but this also approves her choice; he rules all, commands all, judges all, what then can she want who hath such a friend, such a husband, whose government is so winning, mild and mercifull?

He is not such a Monarch as loves to get authority by sternnesse like Rehoboam; but by those amiable graces of gentlenesse and love, all the excellencies of holiness, purity and righteousness, are sweetly tempered with love and meeknesse in him. You may see for instance how he takes his Disciples part against the Pharisees (and the poore

Col. i. ii.

Mat. i. 2.

John 5.

SER. XV.
Luk. 7. 44.
That Christ
takes part with
the affl. eted
ſide.

Act. 9.

poore womans that came to wash his feet and kissed them) against the *Pharisee* that had invited him to dinner. The Church is a company of despised people, that are scorned of Pharisaicall proud spirits, who perhaps have morality and strength of parts to praise them with. Now Christ takes part with the broken spirits against all proud spirits, howſoever he be gone to Heaven (where he is full of Majestie) yet he hath not forgotten his meekneſſe, nor changed his nature with change of honour. He is now more honoured then he was ; for, *he hath a Name above all Names, in Heaven or in Earth*, yet he is pittifull still. *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?* He makes the Churches caſe his owne ſtill, together with beames of glory, there are bowels of pitty in him, the ſame that he had here upon earth : Which makes him ſo lovely to the truly broken hearted beleeving ſoule, *My Beloved is white and ruddy.*

He is ſet out likewife by comparing him with all others whatſoever, *he is the chiefe of ten thouſand*, a certaine number for an uncertaine, that is, the chiefe among all. In all things Christ hath the preheminence ; *He is the firſt borne from the dead he is the firſt borne of every creature, he is the eldest brother*, he is the chiefe among all : For all Kings, Priests and Prophets before were but types and shadowes of him : He the body, the truth and the ſubſtance. And (as was ſhewed before) he is all three in one, *King, Priest and Prophet*, the great Doctor and Prophet of his Church, that ſpoke by all

all the former Prophets, and speaks by his Ministers to the end of the world. *The Angell of the Covenant, that ~~lays~~, the word that expiseth his Fathers brest, that as he came from the bosome of his Father, so layes open his counsell to mankind.* It was he that spake by *Noah*, and preached by his Spirit to the loules that are now in prison (as *Peter* speaks) so *he is the chiefe among all*: But especially in regard of his Righteousnesse; for which *Paul* accounted all dung and droffe to be found in *Christ*, not having his owne Righteousnesse, but the Righteousnesse which is in *Christ*: which is more then the Righteousnesse of an *Angell*, being the Righteousnesse of God-Man, and above all the Righteousnesse of the Law.

But what is this to us or to the Church? yes, for his beauty and excellency is the Churches, because he is the Churches. *My Beloved is white and ruddy, and my Beloved is the chiefe among ten thousand.* It is the peculiar interest that the Church hath in *Christ* that doth relish her Spirit, excellency with propriety in him: *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.* The more excellent the husband is, the more excellent is the wife, she onely shines in his beames; therefore it is the interest that we have in *Christ* that indeares *Christ* to us. But to come to more particular application of it, Is *Christ* thus excellent, superexcellent, thus transcendently excellent, white and ruddy, the chiefe of ten thousand? This serves,

To draw those that are not yet in *Christ* unto him.

1 Pet 3.19.

Phil. 3.8.

Quest
Answ.

That peculiari-
tie of interest
joynd with the
excellencie of
Christ is that
which so ravi-
sheth the
church.

SER.XV.

2.

Uſe I.

*Tbat ſuperemi-
nent excellencies
in Christ ought
to draw thofe
to him who are
not yet drawne
to him.*

To comfort thofe that are in Christ.

First, thofe that are not yet in Christ, not contracted to him to draw them; what can prevaile more then that which is in Christ? Beauty and excellencies, greatnesse and goodnesse. And indeed one maine end of our calling, the Ministry is, to lay open and unfold the unſearchable riches of Christ, to dig up the mine, thereby to draw the affections of thofe that belong to God to Christ.

*That with a
ſight of Chrifts
excellency, we
muſt ſee our
owne debt, beg-
gery and miſery
to draw us unto
Chrift.*

But it is not enough to know that there are excellencies in Christ to draw us to him; but, *there muſt be a ſight of our miſery, what beggers we are, and how indebted.* Before we are in Christ we are not our owne, the Devill layes claime to us that we are his, death layes claime to us, we are under ſinne, we cannot ſatisfie one of a thouſand; therefore this inforck to make out to joine with him that can diſcharge all our debts, answer all our ſuits, and non ſuit Satan in the Court of Heaven. When once we are married to the Lord of Heaven and earth, all is ours: We have a large Charter, *All things are yours, and you are Chrifts, and Chrift is Gods.*

1 Cor 3,22.

Quesṭ.

Anſw.

*Tbat ſeeing the
end of our miſery
is to mee us
to come unto
Chrift, wee
ſhould not bee
discouraged to
come unto him.*

Why are all things ours?

Because we are married to Chrift who is Lord of all. It is the end of our calling to ſue for a marriage between Chrift and every ſoule, we are the friends of the Bride to bring the Church to him, and the friends of the Church to bring Chrift to them. It is the end of our Ministry to bring the ſoule and Chrift together; and let no debts,

debts, no finnes hinder, foreſpecially he invites ſuch as are ſenſible of their finnes, where finne abounds, grace abounds much more: Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden. And he came to ſeeke and to ſave that which was lost. He requires no more, but that we be ſenſible of our debts and miseries, which ſenſe he works likewiſe by his holy Spirit.

Againe, for thoſe that have entertained Christ, let them ſee what an excellent gracious Person they have entertained, who is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand. The world thinks them a company of ſilly mean people that make choice of Christ, Religion, the Word, and ſuch things; but here is a justification of their choice, they chose him that is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand, Let him kiſſe me with the kiſſes of his mouth (ſaith the Spouse) for thy love is better then wine, nay then life it ſelue. A Christian may justifie the choice that he hath made with Mary of the good part, againſt all thoſe that ſhall diſparage his choice. Let the world account Christians whatthey will, that they are a company of deluded beſotted persons, fooles and mad men. The Christian is the only wiſe man: Wiſedome is ſeen in choice eſpecially; and here is the choice of that which is excellent and moſt excellent of all, the chiefeſt of ten thouſand.

So alſo, We may ſee here the deſperate and baſe folly of all whatſoever (ſave true Christians) what do they make choice of to joynetoo, hat which is baſe, the condemned world, vaine tranſitory things, and refuſe Christ? Are they in their

SER.XV.

Rom 3.20.
Mat 11.28.
Luk.19.20.

For thoſe in the ſtate of grace to ſee what an excellent person they have en-tertained.

Cant. 1.

Luk.10 41.

Vſe 3.
The deſperate
miſerable choiſe
of moſt men.

SER. XV.

Simile.

Pſal 81.

what it is to be
married to
Christ.

right wits who refuse a Husband that is noble for birth, rich for estate, mighty for power, abundant in kindeſſe and love it ſelfe, every way excellent ? and take a base, ignoble, beggerly perſon, this is the choice of the world. God complains, *Israel would none of me*, &c. What ſhal we judge therefore of thoſe that will none of Christ when he woos and ſues them, but preferre with *Esau* a mesſe of portage before their eternall birthright; with *Adam* an apple before Paradice ; and with *Iudas* thirty pieces of filver before Christ himſelue : This is the ſtate of many men. *To be married to Christ is to take him for an husband, to be ruled by him in all things.* Now when we prefer base commodities and contentments before peace of conſcience, and the enjoying of his love ; what is it, but for pelfe and commodity, thirty pieces of filver (perhaps for ſix pence, a thing of nothing) to refufe Christ ; yet this is the condition of base worldlings that live by ſenſe and not by faith. So then as it ſerves to comfort thoſe that have made a true choice, ſo it ſerves to ſhew the madneſſe and folly of all others, which one day will feele their hearts full of horrore and conuſion, and their faces of shame, when they ſhall thinke what hath Christ made ſuſe to my heart to win my love ? hath he ordained a Minstery for to bring me in ? made ſuſe large promises, is he ſo excellent ? and was this diſcovered to me, and yet would I none of him ? what did I chufe ? and what did I leave ? I left Christ with all his riches, and made choice of the

the pleaſures and profits of ſinne, which are but for a ſeafon. When the conſcience is once throughly awaked this will torment it, the punishment of loſſe, not of loſſe ſimply, as the loſſe of Christ and the loſſe of Heaven, but *the loſſe of Christ and of Heaven ſo diſcovered and opened;* therefore there is no condition in the world ſo terrible as of thoſe that live in the Churche, and heare thoſe things of Christ crucified unfolded to them before their eyes, as Paul ſpeaks of the Miniftrey, it makes Christ Crosse ſo open to them as if he had been crucified before their eyes ; yet notwithstanding yeeld to their base hearts, deſires and affeſtions before thoſe excellencies, which if they had a ſpirit of faith would draw their hearts to him.

Therefore let us conſider how we heare thoſe things, it concerneſ us nearly; on the one ſide we ſee what we get if we joyne with Christ, we have him and his : on the contrary we loſe him; and not only ſo, but we gaine eternall miſery, and periſh eternally. O what baſeneſſe of mind poſſeffeth us ! Christ left all things in love to us, and we leave Christ for any pauleſy thing in the world almoſt, to please and content the humours of ſinfull men, to attaine a few empty titles, to get a little wealth, enjoy a little pleaſure. You ſee then the equity of that terrible commination that you have, i Cor. 16. *If any man love not the Lord Iefus Christ, let him be Anathema maranatha;* let him be accuſed for ever that loves not the Lord Iefus Christ : If any man ſinne there is a re-

SER. XV.
Heb. 11.

That the grea-
test loſſe of all
is Christ diſco-
vered in his ex-
cellency.

Gal. 3.

To take heed
how we beare.

SER.XV.

Mat. 3.17.

Heb. 2.

medy to discharge his sin in Iesus Christ : If he will marry him and take him ; but when Christ is offered, and we will have none of him, we sinne against the Gospell, and then there is no remedy, there is nothing but *Anathema* and *Maranatha*; therefore *the most dangerous sinnes of all*, are those against the light of the Gospell: when yet we chose rather to live as we list, then to joyne our selves to Christ. To this purpose, *Heb. 2.* Saint *Paul* makes an use of the first Chapter, wherein he sets out the excellency of Christ whom the Angels adore; he is so beautifull, so lovely, that God the Father is in love with him, and pronounceth *this is my Beloved sonne*: In the beginning of the second Chapter, *Wherefore*(saith he) *how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation*; for, *if they escaped not that despised Moses Law, &c.* *How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?* he sayes not, *if we oppose Christ*; but if we neglect him, if we doe not love so great salvation, as *2 Thes. 1. 8.* it is said, *Christ will come in flaming fire to take vengeance of all those that doe not know God, and obey not the Gospell of Christ*, though they do not persecute it.

Therefore this reproves all civill morall persons that thinke they have riches enough, not onely debauched persons, but selfe-sufficient persons, that thinke they have any Righteousnesse of their owne, let them know, that *Christ shall come in flaming fire to take vengeance of such*. This is the scope of the second Psalme, which ye know sets out the excellency of Christ, *I have set*

set my King upon Zion, God the Father there
anoyns Christ King of the Church : To what
end? That we should kisse the Sonne, kisse him with
the kisse of subjection (as Subjects doe their
Prince) with the kisse of love, as the Spouse doth
her Husband, and with the kisse of faith. But what
if we doenot kisse him, and subject our selves to
him, love him and believe in him. If his wrath be
once kindled, happy are all those that trust in him.
He is a Lambe, but such a one as can be angry, as
Rev.6. It is said, *The Kings and great persons of
the world fly from the wrath of the Lambe*; He that
is so sweet, mild and gentle, if we joyne with
him, on the contrary, if we come not unto him,
we shall find the wrath of the Lambe a terrible
wrath, which the greatest Potentates in the
world shall desire to be hid from. If his wrath be
once kindled, blessed are all those that trust in him,
and woe be to them that doe not receive him,

For us that profess our selves to be in Christ,
and to be joyned to him that is thus excellent, let
us make this use, to make him the rule of our choice
in other things. In the choise of friends chuse such as
are friends to Christ, take heed of society with
Idolaters, or with prophane wretched persons.
If you will be joyned to Christ, and profess
your selves to be so, then let us joyne to none but
those that we can enjoy and Christ too : So in
marriage let the rule of choice be, the love of
Christ ; and likewise let the measure of our re-
spect to all things be, therespect to Christ, let us
measure our love to wife and children, to kin-

S E R. XV.
Psal. 2.

W hat it is to
kisse the son.

Use 2.
For those who
are in Christ to
make him the
rule of their
choice in other
things.
In Friendship.

In Marriage.

S.B.R.XV.

In all things
what ever
love all with
ref erence to
Christ

1 Cor. 7.39.

Uſe 3.

For direc tion.

dred, friends, and to all creatures whatsoeuer, as it may stand with love to Christ. Obey in the Lord, Marry in the Lord, doe all things in the Lord, so as may stand with the love and allowance of the Lord.

Make also a Uſe of direc tion, How to come to value Christ thus, as to keep an highteem of him; for this followes infallibly and undeniably: If Christ be *the chiefe of ten thouſand*, he must have the chiefe of our affections, *above ten thouſand*; for as he is in excellency, he must have place in our hearts answerable thereunto; for, then our soules are as they ſhould be, when they judge of, and affect things as they are in themſelves.

*Anſw. I*By a deep conſideration of our
neceſſity without
out him.

First, Let us enter into a ſerious conſideration of the need we have of Christ, of our misery without him, of our happinelleſſe if we be joyned with him, the ſoule being thus convinced, the affections muſt needs follow the ſanctified judgement.

That exalting
Christ high in
the heart is a
ſtrong preſer-
vative againſt
ſinne.

What will come of it, If Christ be ſet in the highest place in our heart? If we crowne him there, and make him *King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*, in a hearty ſubmitting of all the affections of the ſoule to him; while the ſoule continues in that frame, it cannot be drawne to ſin, diſcomfort, and diſpaire. The honours, pleafures and profits that are got by base engagements to the humours of men, what are theſe to Christ? when the ſoule is rightly poſſeſt of Christ and of his excellency, it diſdaunes that any

any thing should come in competition with him.

Againe, It stands firme against all discouragements whatsoever; for it sets Christ against all, who is the chief of ten thousand. The soule in this case will set Christ against the anger and wrath of God, against Satan and all our spirituall enemies. Christ is the Angell of the Covenant, Satan is a Lyon, a roaring Lyon; Christ the Lyon of the tribe of Iuda; Satan a Serpent, a Dragon: But Christ the true Brazen Serpent, the very looking upon whom will take away all the stings and fiery darts of Satan whatsoever: wherefore it is said, *1 John 5.* that Faith is that that overcommeth the world. *How doth Faith overcome the world?* Because it overcomes all things in the world, as on the right hand, pleasures, and profits and honours, and on the left hand threathenings, paines, losses, and disgraces, by setting Christ against all.

Againe, if we would have a right judgement and esteeme of Christ, *Let us labour to weare our affections as much as may be from other things.* Fleshly hearts that have run so deeply into the world and vanities of this present life, it is in a sort an extraordinary taske for them to be drawn away, and pulled from the world (as a childe from a full breast) which they have sucked so long. Now for sweet affections that are tender, it is an excellent advantage they have to consider betimes that there is that in Religion and in the Gospell, which is worth their best and prime affections,

2.
We must labour to weare our hearts from other things.

SER. XV. affections, the flower and marrow of them, let them begin with young *Timothy*, *Daniel* and *Ioseph* to love Christ from their childehood. It is a desperate folly on the other hand to put off the regard of good things till after when we shall be lesse fit, when the *understanding* will be darkned, and the affections blunted; when wee shall not have that edge, nature being decayed, and the world having taken such possession of the soule, that we shall not value this excellency; therefore let us begin betimes to make up the marriage between Christ and the soule, no time indeed is too late, but it were to be wished that those that are young would be thus wise for their soules betimes.

*To value Christ
we must beg of
God a Spirit to
judge aright of
our corruptions.*

Rom. 5.

Luk. 7.

Besides, if we would highly value Christ (*beg of God a Spirit that we may judge aright of our corruptions*) for, in what measure we can discerne the height, and bredth, and depth of our corrupt nature in that measure shall we judge of the height and bredth, and depth of the excellency of Christ. The sweetest soules are the most humble soules; those that love Christ most, are those that have been stung most with the sense of their finnes; where sinne most abounds in the sence and feeling of it, grace much more abounds in the sence and feeling of that. Did ever soule love Christ more then that woman that had so many Devils cast out of her? And Paul that had such great finnes forgiven? Doth any man so love his creditor as he that hath much debt forgiven him? It is our Saviour Christ's owne reason, therefore these two goe always

wayes with the true Church. 1. The true knowledge of the corruption of nature, and misery by reason of it. And 2. The true sence and feeling of it, with true and hearty sorrow for it, &c. In Popery they sleight Originall sinne, that mother-bredgind sinne; Actuall sins be veniall sins, and many sinnes no sinnes. And therefore they esteeme so sleightly of Christ, that they joyne *Saints*, the *Pope*, *Works* & *Satisfaction* with him, because they know not the depth of the malady, how blacke sinne is, what a cursed estate we are in by nature: they have sleight, shallow, and weake conceits of sinne, therefore they have answerable, weake, and shallow conceits of Christ, and of his Righteousnesse and excellency. Therefore the conviction of our sinnes goeth before the conviction of Righteousnesse in Christ (as it is said, *Ioh. 16.*) The Holy-Ghost shall convince the world of sin, and then of Righteousnesse; for except the soule be convinced of sin and of ill in it selfe, it will never be truly convinced of good, and of Righteousnesse in Christ.

The *Passeover* was alwayes eaten with sowre herbs, because it should adde a relish to the feast. So Christ the true *Passeover* we never relish truly without sowre herbs, the consideration of sinne with the desert of it. Christ savours ot herwise to a man humbled for his sinnes, then he doth to another man not touched therewith; otherwise to a man humbled for his sinnes, then he doth to another man not touched therewith; otherwise to a poore man then he doth to a rich; otherwise

S.B.R. XV.

Two attendants
o' the true
Churcb.

Why sin is so
sleighted in
Popery.

Why the *Passe-*
over was eaten
with sowre
herbs.

wife to a man that the world goes not well on his ſide, thento a prosperous man. One ſavoury diſcourse of Christ reſiſteth more to an afflieted ſoule, then ſeven diſcourses with ſuch as are drunke with proſperity, not having a brain ſtrong enough to conceive, nor an appetiſte to rellifh heavenly things.

Therefore why doe we murmur at the crosse, when all is to recover our ſpirituall taste and rellifh? Solomon had loſt his taste and rellifh of Christ, he never made his *Song of Songs* when he was in his idolatrous way, nor was ſo in love with Christ and his excellencies when he doted ſo much upon his wives: no, but when he had recovered his ſpirits taſt and rellifh of heavenly things once, then made he the book of the *Preacher*. When hee had run through variety of things, and ſaw all to be nothing but vexation of ſpirit; and beſides that, vanity, then he paſſeth his verdict upon all things that they were vanity. So it is with us, we can hardly prize Christ without ſome afflictions, ſome crosse or other; therefore here the Church is faine to endure a ſpirituall deſertion, to ſet an edge upon her affections. Now when ſhe is thus in her deſertions, *Christ is white and ruddy the chiefeſt of ten thouſand.*

Want makes us value things the more.

We value more, and ſet a higher prize on things in the want of them (ſuch is our corruption) then in the enjoying of them. And if God remember us not with affliction, then let us affliet, humble and judge our ſelves, enter into our owne ſoules to view how we ſtand affected to

to Christ, to Heaven, and to heavenly things : how doe I relish and esteeme them ? if I have lost my esteeme and valuing, where have I lost it, consider in what ſinne, in what pleasure, in what company I lost it ; and converse no more with ſuch as dull our affections to heavenly things.

And, *Let us make uſe likewiſe of our infirmities and ſinnes to this purpoſe, to ſet an high prize on the excellencies of Christ, we carry about uſe alwayes infirmities and corruptions, what uſe ſhall wee make of them ? not to truſt to our owne righteouſneſſe, which is as a defiled cloath :* But fly to *Chrifts Righteouſneſſe, which is the Righteouſneſſe of God Man, all being as dung and droſe in regard of that :* Often thinke with thy ſelfe what am I, a poore ſinfull creature, but I have a Righteouſneſſe in Christ that answers all : I am weake in my ſelfe, but Christ is ſtrong, and I am ſtrong in him. I am foolish in my ſelfe, but I am wiſe in him, what I want in my ſelfe, I have in him ; he is mine, and his Righteouſneſſe is mine, which is the Righteouſneſſe of God man, being cloathed with this I stand ſafe againſt *Conſcience, Hell, wraib and whatſoever.* Though I have daily expe‐rience of my ſins, yet there is more Righteouſneſſe in Christ who is mine, and who is the chiefeſt of ten thouſand, then there is ſinne in me. When thus we ſhall know Christ, then we ſhall know him to purpose.

4.
To eſteeme
Christ highly
uſing our infir‐
mitiess to this
and looking up
on them.
Ifa. 64.6.



The sixteenth Sermon.

CANT. V. XI, XII, XIII.

My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefeſt among ten thouſand.

His head is as fine gold, his lookeſ are buſtie and blaueke as a Raven.

*His eyes are as the eyes of Doves, by the rivers of wa-
ters, waſhed with milke and fyly ſet, &c.*

Obiect.
*How one mans
ſatiſfaction
ſhall ſatiſfie for
the ſins of all.*

Answe.



Ence likewiſe wee may anſwer ſome doubts that may arife, as why the death of one man (*Christ*) ſhould be of value for ſatiſfaction for the ſinnes of the whole world? how can this be?

O but what kind of man was he? *the chiefeſt among ten thouſand*, especially conſidering that his excellency arifeth from the grace of his Perſonall Union of God and Man. The firſt *Adam* tainted thouſands, and would have tainted a world of men more if there had been more; but he was meere man that did this, and ſhall not Christ God and Man the ſecond *Adam* ad-
vance the world, and ten thouſand worlds if
there

there had been more, he is chiefe among ten thousand.

*His head is as most fine gold, his lockes are bushie
and blacke as a Raven, &c.*

1. Positively, He is white and ruddy. 2. Comparatively, He is the chiefest of ten thousand.

The Church doth not thinke it sufficient in generall to set out Christ thus, but she descends into a particular description of him by all the parts of a body that are conspicuous. First in generall observe hence, *That it is the nature of love upon all occasions to reflect upon the thing loved.* As the Church here, from things that are excellent in the world, borrows phrases and comparisons to set out the excellency of Christ, exalting him above any other thing. Whatssoever the soule of a Christian sees in Heaven or Earth, it takes occasion thence to thinke of Christ.

Again, In generall observe from hence, seeing the Church fetcheth comparison from Doves eyes, from the body of a man and other things, *That there are some beames of excellency in every creature.* There is somewhat of God in every creature, this makes the meditation of the creature to be usefull : There is none, even the meanest, but it hath a being, and thereby in a sort sets out the being of God. Why doth God stile himselfe a Shield, a Rocke, a Buckler, a Shadow, and the like. But to shew that there is something of him in these, and therefore to teach us to rise from them to him, in whom all those

Love is ever in-
distrivous to set
out the praises
of the Beloved.

The divers re-
lations God
takes upon him
shewes the
beames of his
excellency in
the creatures.

SER. XVI. those excellencies that are scattered in them are united.

In innocency we knew God, and in him we had knowledge of the creature, but now we are faine to help our selves from the knowledge of the creature to riseto the knowledge of God.

His head is as fine gold.

*That nothing
can dishearten
the Church from
commending
Christ.*

A little in generall, see the boldnesse and largenesse of the Churches affections, who though she had been ill intreated by the *Watchmen* and others, yet is she not disheartened for all this: no, she goes on, and sets out particular commendations of her Beloved. Where love hath any streng: h, no water can quench it. You see the Church here found but cold entertainment from the *Watchmen* and others that should have been better.

*Her inward de-
sertions discon-
rage her not.*

Nay, She was in desertion, yet she was not discouraged, nay not from the desertion that Christ left her in; but she seeks after him whom her soule loved. Oh this is the signe of a true sanctified soule toucht from Heaven, never to give over seeking of Christ, nor setting out his prises, no though it thinks it selfe not beloved of Christ. Aske such ones, doe you love God, his Children, and his Word? Oh you shall have them eloquent, no words are enough to set out their affections.

*Reason of the
first loves ea-
gerneſſe.*

And this is one reason, which we may note by the way, why God plants in his children, at their first conversion a sweet love, which we call *the first love*, that when desertions come, they may

Hos. 2.

may call to mind what they felt from Christ, and what they bore to him ; and thereupon the Church concludes, Hos. 2. *I will returne to my first love, for then was I better then now.* The Church here from what doth she commend her Beloved ? but from somewhat that was left in her soul, some inward taste of the love of Christ in her, she called to mind how it was with her before in the former part of this, and in the latter end of the former Chapter, what an excellent estate she had been in , this helped her to recover her selfe.

Now you may say, *Why is she so exact in reckoning up so many particulars of her Beloved, his Head, Lockes, Eyes, Lips, and such like?*

Why, It is from largenesse of affection. A large heart hath alway large expressions, when we are barren in expressions towards Christ , and of good things , whence comes this but from narrow poore affections. The Church had large affections ; therefore she had suitable expressions.

And then she is thus particular, because Christ hath not one but many excellencies; every thing in him is excellent, inward and outward, as his head, &c. For indeed beauty consists not in sweetnesse of colour only, but in affinity and proportion of all parts. Now there is all sweet proportion in Christ : so it should be with Christians ; they should not have one excellency, but many : those that receive Grace for Grace from Christ have not onely Head, Eyes, Hands, and

A a

Feet

*Why the Church
is so exact in
particularising
her Beloved.*

1.
*Because a large
heart hath unsat-
isfied affec-
tions.*

2.
*Because Christ
hath not one
but many ex-
cellencies in
him.
Beauty wherein
it consists.*

Ioh. 1.

SER. XVI.

3.
Because she had
seriously and
exactly studied
Christ to pur-
pose.

Feet good; but all lovely, *Grace for Grace*, answerable to the variety of Graces in Iesus Christ, in whom all things joyntly, and every thing severally are lovely.

Then she sheweth her particular care and study, to be exact in this knowledge of Christ, to rip him up and anatomize him thus from Head to Foot, it argueth she had studied Christ well ere she could attaine this excellency: so it should be the study and care of every Christian to study the excellencies of Christ, not only in the grosse, to say as much as you have in the *Creed*; he was borne for us of the *Virgin Mary*, was crucified, dead and buried, &c. which every childe can say; but to be able to particularize the high perfections and excellencies of Christ; as the Church here, to study his Nature, Offices, the State he was in, and how he carried himselfe in his humiliation and exaltation: what good we have by both states; *Redemption* by his *abasement*; *application of it by his advancement*. What he did for us on Earth; what he doth in Heaven; what in *Justification, Adoption, Sanctification*, and in the glory to come. Study every thing and warme the heart with the meditation of them.

That all hu-
mane eloquence
comes short o
the excellencies
of Christ.

This particular spreading and laying open the excellencies of Christ is a thing worthy of a Christian. We make sleight worke of Religion, we can be particular and eloquent enough in other things, but in that wherein all eloquence is too little, how barren are we, how shamefaced to speake of Christ and his excellencies in base

company, as if it were a dishonour. Let us therefore learne this from the Church here, to be much in thoughts and meditations of the excellencies of Christ, and so our expressions will be answerable to our meditations. So the holy Fathers that were godly (till another kind of Divinity came into the world of Querkes and subtleties) there was none of them but was excellent this way. *Pau*l admirable, accounting all dung and drosse in comparison of Christ. In speaking of him when he begins, he goes on from one thing to another, as if he were ravished, and knew not how nor where to end.

The soule hath sights of Christ that God shewes to it, and which the soule presents to it selfe by the help of the Spirit. The sights that God in this kind shewes, are to those in affliction especially, as *Daniell* and *Isay* saw Christ in his glory in a vision: so *Ezechiel* had a vision, and *John Rev. 1.* where Christ was presented to him gloriously. So there is a glorious description of Christ present to the Church, *Rev. 4.5.*

And as there are sights let downe from God into the soule, so there are sights that the soule frames of Christ, such as the Church here conceives of him by *faith*: Thus *Moses* saw him before he was incarnate, and *Abraham* saw his day and rejoiced: so should we now have spirituall sights, *Ideas* of Christ framed to our soules, this is to bestow our soules as we should doe. So much for generall, now wee come to some particulars. *His head is as fine gold, his lockes*

*That the soule
hath peculiar
sights of its
owne.*

*Sights of faith
which the soule
frames of Christ*

Ioh 8.

SBR.XVI. are bushie and blacke as a Raven.

His Head is as fine gold.

He begins to set out the excellency of the chiefe part the Head. The Head of Christ is God, as it is, *1 Cor. 11.3.* He is above all, and God onely is above him. All is yours, and you are Christs, and Christ is Gods, but that is not so much intended here, as to shew Christs head-ship over the Church, as God and Man, his Head is as fine gold, that is, his government and head-ship is a most sweet and golden go-
vernment.

*That a head of
gold sets forth
Christs go-
vernment.*

Simile.

Daniel 2. You have an Image of the Monar-
chies, the first whereof had a golden Head,
which was the *Chaldean*. The best Monarchy is
set out by the best metall gold : so Christ the
head of the Church is a precious head, a head of
gold.

A Head hath an eminency above all others,
an influence and motion above all other parts,
it is the seat of the fences : so this golden head is
more eminent then all, governes the whole
Church, and hath influence into all ; in him we
live, and move, and have our being.

*Why is Christ as King thus resembled to an head
of gold?*

Because gold is the chiefe, the most precious,
durable metall of all others. Christ is a King
for ever, and hath an everlasting government.
Gold is also the most pliable metall, you may
beare it out to leaves more then any other met-
tall whatsoever. Christ is all gold indeed, his
love

love hath beat himselfe out as low as may be, all for our good. What abasement like to Christ's ? That which is most precious is most communicating, as the Sunne a glorious creature, what doth so much good as it ? so Christ as he is the most excellent of all, *the chiefe of ten thousand*, so is he also the most communicative : what good to the good that Christ did ? hee was beaten out of love to mankinde to lowest abasement for us , though this be not mainly aymed at here, yet (by the way) speaking of gold, we may present to our selves such comfortable meditations.

Well then is Christ such an excellent head, a golden head, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisedome to governe his Church, what need we then goe to that triple crowne, having such a golden head, the Apostacy of the Church hath found out another golden head , is not Christ precious enough ? Let us take heed of leaving the head Christ, as it is *Col. 2.19*. It is a damnable thing to forsake him. Let the Apostaticall Church alone with her Antichrist.

Againe, if Christ be a golden head, let us his members labour every one to be sutable, though there be difference between the head and the members in many respects, especially in those three formerly named, Eminency, Government, and Influence ; yet for nature they are one, head and members make but one : So that as the head of the body is gold, so should every member be ; therefore the seven Churches are stiled seven

Use 1.
That there is no golden head of the Church but Christ.

2.
We must be suitable to Christ our head.

SER.XVI.
Simile.

golden Candlestickes. Every thing in the Tabernacle was gold, even to the snuffers, to shew that in the Church every thing is excellent. The Tabernacle was gold most of it, though it was covered with Badgers-skins. The Church indeed hath a poore covering, as of Badgers skins, not gilded as hypocrites, but it is precious within. Againe, Christ as he is gold, so he is fine gold, whole gold, he hath not only the crown on him, but his head is gold it selfe. Other Kings their crownes are of gold, but their heads are not so; but there is such a precious treasure of wisedome in him that his head is gold: so let the Church and every Christian labour not to be guilt but gold, to be throughly good, to have the inside as good as the outside, the heart as good as the conversation, the Church is glorious within, Psa. 45. Beloved, Is Christ an excellent golden head, and shall he have a base body? Is he fit to be united to a golden head that is a common drunkard, a sweater, that is a beast in his life and conversation, is this furable?

3.
To know that
all our excellencies come from
a golden head.
Rev.4.10.

Againe, Is our head so golden, and whatsoever excellency we have, is it from our head? therefore as the Church in the *Revelation*, let us cast all our crownes at his feet. Have we crownes of gold, any thing that is excellent within, any grace, any comfort, let us lay it downe at his feet, for all is from him. Naturall men have golden Images of their owne, *Israell* would have golden calves, *Nebuchadnezzar* sets up a golden Image, and all must worship it: so in the declining times

of

of the Church, they framed golden Images, that is, a golden, whorish Religion, gilded, and painted, framed by their owne braine, whereunto all must stoop. But the truegold is that we must respect and submit our selves unto and admire, others are but golden dreames and Images (as Nebuchadnezzars was) *Christ's head alone is of fine gold.*

All must be fine gold that comes from this head, his word is gold, sometimes purged in the fire : his ordinances gold, in the Scripture phrase, the City, the new Ierusalem, which signifies the state of the Church in this world, when it shall be refined to the utmost, all is of gold, the wals of precious stones, the gates of pearle, and the pavement of the streets of pure gold, to shew the excellency of reformation, which golden times are yet to come, in the meane time let us goe on and wait for them.

His locks are bushie and blacke as a Raven.

I think this is but complementall to fill up the other, it is nothing but a commendation of his freshnesse, a foile to beauty, therefore not particularly to be stood upon.

His eyes are as doves eyes by the rivers of waters, &c.

His eyes are as doves eyes, and such eyes as are by the rivers of waters, where they are cleansed and washed with milke, that they may be the clearer, and fitly set, neither gogle eyes, nor sunk into the head, but fitly set ; as a jewell in a ring, neither too much in, nor too much out, to set out

SER.XVI.

the comeliness of this part the eye which is the glory of the face.

*Quest**Answ.*

Why is Christ said to have the eyes of doves? The dove hath many enemies, especially the white dove is a faire marke for the birds of prey, therefore God hath given that creature a quicke sight, that she might discerne her enemies. Thus the Scripture helps us to conceive of the quicknesse of Christs eye, Rev.5.6. there are seven hornes and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, here Christ the Lambe hath seven eyes and seven hornes: what be these? Christ hath not onely hornes of power as the enemies have hornes of violence: he hath horne against horne; but seven eyes, that is, a quicke sight to see all the danger the Church is in, and seven eyes; *seven* is a word of perfection, that is, he hath many eyes, an accurate sight: He hath not onely an eye of providence over the whole world; but an eye of grace and favour, lively and lovely in regard of his Church. All things are naked and open before his eyes, as it is, Heb.4. he can see through us, he knowes our very hearts and raines, which he must doe ex Officio, because he must be our Judge. He that is Judge of all had need to have eyes that will pierce through all. It had need be a quicke eye that must judge of the heart and affections; but what may we learne hence, That wee have a Saviour that hath doves eyes, that is, cleare eyesable to discerne.

Vise.
All comorts to
the Church.
Joh.22.

Take it as a point first of all comfort to the Church,

Church, that when we have any imputation lies upon us, that we are thus and thus. Christ hath quicke eyes, he knowes our hearts, *thou knowest* (saith Peter) *Lord that I love thee*, in all false imputations rest in the eye-sight of Christ, he knowes it is otherwise with us.

Then againe in all abasement know, that there is an eye that sees all ; he sees with his eye, and pitties with his heart : As he hath a quicke eye, so he hath a tender hearr, though he seemes to sleep and to winke, it is but that we may wake him with our prayers, which when we have done we shall see that Christ hath seene all this while, and that the violence the enemies of God have offered to his Church, the Spouse hath been in his sight, and that they shall know at length to their cost.

Likewise it is a point of terour to all hypocrites and others that thinke to blindfold Christ againe. Can they blindfold him in Heaven that hath this sharpe eye ? No he sees all their courses and projects what they are, and what they tend to, and as he sees them so he will spread them all open ere long.

And as it is a point of comfort and terour, so it is a point of instruction to us all, that wee having to deale with a Judge that sees all, to worship Christ in Spirit. If we had knowledge that such an eye of God is fixed upon us in all places, in all our affections and actions, would we give liberty to base and filthy thoughts, to cruell designes, and to treacherous aymes and intents,

Use 2.
It is both con-
fort and terror

Use 3.
Instruction to
us all.

SER.XVI.

to hatch a hell (as it were) in our hearts, and to carry a faire shew outwardly ! it could not be. Men are not afraid of their thoughts, affections, desires, and inward delights of the foule; because there is no eye of justice upon them ; but if they did consider that the All-seeing God did obſerve these inward evils, and would call them to account one day for them, then they would be aswell afraid to thinke ill as to doe ill.

His cheekeſ are as bedſ of ſpices, and as ſweet flowers.

Cheekeſ are the grace of the face, they are used here to denote the presence of Christ, which is ſweet as ſpices and flowers ; not onely his presence is glorious in Heaven, when we ſhall ſee that goodly person of Christ that became man for us, that transforming ſight that shall make us like himſelfe; but the ſpirituall presence of Christ in his ordinances, which we are capable of here, this is as ſpices and flowers.

But you will ſay, *Cheekeſ, face, and presence present colours to the eyes, and not ſmells, as ſpices and flowers which are the peculiar object of another ſence?*

Anſw.

Oh but Christ is the object of all the ſenses. Beloved, he is not onely beauty to the eye, but ſweetneſſe to the ſmell, and to the taſt ; therefore faith hath the name of all the ſences, to ſee, heare, taſt, and ſmell, and doth all, because it carries us to Christ, that is in ſtead of all to us, but the point is,

Obſerv.

That the maniſtation of Christ to his Church and children

children by his Spirit in any of his ordinances, is a sweete maniſtation, and delectable as ſpices and flowers, as it is, *Can. I. 3.* Because of the favour of thy good oyntments, thy name is as an oyntment powred out, therefore the Virgins love thee. The very name of Christ when he is knowne and laid open by the miniftry, is a precious oyntment, and the Virgins, that is, all chaste ſoules follow him by the ſmell of his oyntments, all his ordinances convey a ſweetneſſe to the ſoule; his Sa-craments are ſweet, his Word ſweet, the com-munion of Saints ſweet. The preſence of the Sun you know is knowne in the Spring time by the freshness of all things, which put forth the life, and little liveliness they have in them; ſome in bloſſoming, and ſome in flowers; that which lay (as it were) dead in Winter, it comes out when the Sunne drawes neare: ſo when Christ comes and ſhewes his preſence and face to the ſoule, he refresheth and delights it.

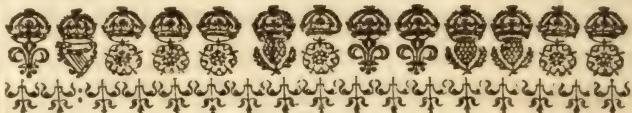
Hence we ſee they are enemies to Christ and to the ſoules of Gods people, that hinder the maniſtation of Christ, where by his face might be ſeen, and his lovely cheekeſ diſcerned; thoſe that hate and undermine the ordinances of God, they hinder the comforts of their owne ſoules.

And they are enemies to Christ, for when hath Christ glory but when the Virgins follow him in the ſent of his ſweet oyntments, when the ſoule in the ſenſe of his ſweetneſſe followes him and cleaves to him with joy, love, and delight,

this

*That all Chrifl's
ordinances are
ſweet and love-
ly, and what fo-
ever proceeds
from them.*

SER. XVII this makes Christ Christ, and sets him up in the heart above all others. This is the proper worke of the ordinances. Those therefore that are enemies to the ordinances of Christ, are enemies to the soules of Gods people, and to the glory and honour of Christ himselfe. Thus farre we may goe safely upon comparison of this with other Scriptures.



The seventeenth Sermon.

CANT. V. XIII.

His lips are like Lillies dropping sweet smelling myrrh, his hands are as gold rings set with Berill, his belly is as bright Ivory overlaid with Saphires, his legs, &c.

IN speaking of these particulars we are to be very wary, for we have not that foundation as we have in other generals ; for no doubt but the Spirit of God here did more intend to set out the large affection that the Church had to Christ, then to insinuate any great particularity in every one of these ; therefore let us onely cull out, and take

take those things that are of more easie ex-
ploration.

SER.XVII

*His Lips are as Lillies dropping downe sweet
myrrh.*

That is, his doctrine is as sweet as the Lillies, and sound as the myrrh, keeping from purrefaction, it being the nature of myrrh, as it is sound its selfe, so to make other things sound. In like manner the speech of Christ makes the soule sound that embraceth it. What was ever more sweet then the truth of Christ? when he spake himselfe, they all hung upon his lips (as the phrase is in the Gospell) as a man hangs upon the lips of another whom he desires and delights to heare speake, and they maruelled at the gracious words that came out of his lips, *Psal. 45.* Grace was in his lips, all was sweet that came from him, for it came from the excellency of his Spirit, his words were died in these affections of his heart. In the learned language, the same word signifieth speech and reason, to intimate that speech is but the current of reason from the heart the seat of reason; therefore Christs speeches were sweet, because his heart was sweet, full of all love, grace, mercy, and goodnessse; his heart was a treasure, his lips must needs then be sweet. Beloved, therefore let us hence take a tryall of our selves what our condition is, whether the words that come from Christ when he speaks in his Ministry to us be sweet or not.

Luk. 4.20.

The Word (to some kind of men) is like the Northerne ayre which parcheth and cutteth:

Ahab

Mat. 12.34,35.

SER. XVII

1 Kin. 21:
Mark. 6.16.
Act. 22, 22.

Ahab could not endure the breath of Elias, nor Herodias the breath of John Baptist, nor the Pharisees the breath of Steven and Paul. So too many now adayes cannot endure the breath of divine truth when it cuts and pierceth. These words are arrowes that sticke; if they sticke not savingly, they stick to killing; if we cannot endure Christ's breath, we are not his Spouse, nor have any communion with him.

His lips are like lillies dropping sweet myrrh, &c.

This is one excellency of Christ and of his truth, that it preservesthe soule in a pure estate, it is pure it selfe, and so it preserves the soule. Myrrh is a liquor that keeps from putrefaction: there is nothing that keeps the soul but the word that endures for ever, whereas on the other side errour is of a putrifying nature, corrupting and defiling the soule.

His hands are as gold rings set with Berill, &c.

Hands are the instruments of actions, Christ's actions are precious, whatsoever he doth to the Church, nay even when he doth use evill men to afflict and exercise the Church, he hath a hand there, a golden, a precious hand: In the evill hand of wicked men God doth all things by Christ, he is as it were Gods hand which all things passe through. Joseph was the second man of Egypt through whose hands allthings came to the rest: so all things come through Christ's hands to us, and whatsoever is his handy worke is good, even as it is said in the dayes of his flesh, he did all things well: so still in the Church all his workmanship

That all Christ's
actions whatsoe-
ever are pre-
cious.

Heb. 1.

Ioh. 5.12.

manship is exceeding well, though we cannot see the excellency of it, it is all well both in the government of the Church and his workmanship in our hearts, the new creature.

His belly is as bright Yvory overlaid, &c.

His belly that is his inward parts : In the Hebrew it is used for the inward affections, they are as bright Yvory overlaid with Saphires, that is, they are pure, all the inside of Christ, all his affections that he beares are wondrous good, his love, his desires, his joyes, his hatred, all pure, like pure water in a Chrystall glasse, it may be stirred sometimes, but still it is cleare, there are no dregs at the bottome, because there was no taint of sin in him.

His legs are as pillars of marble set on sockets of fine gold, &c.

That is, all his passages and wayes are constant and firme even as pillars of marble, his children are so likewise as farre as they are indued with his Spirit. Christ is yesterday, to day, and the same for ever. In regard of his enemies, *Rev. I.* He is set out in another manner of similitude, as having legs of brasse to trample them all in pieces. But in respect of his constant truth and wayes of goodnessse to his Church; his legs are as pillars of marble.

*All Christ's
wayes are con-
stant & firme.
Heb. 13.8.*

His Countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars.

Lebanon was a goodly Forrest lying on the North side of Iudaea, wherein were excellent plants of all kinds, especially Cedars. Christ his coun-

S. XVII

countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the Cedars, that is, his presence is goodly, stately, and majesticall, so it is and will be when he shewes himselfe indeed for the vindicating of his Church, then the enemies thereof shall know that his presence is as Lebanon, and excellent as the Cedars.

In what regard
Christians are
like unto Ce-
dars.

How wicked
men are said
also to be
Cedars.
Psal. 37.

That the words
of Christ whereby
he manifesteth
fatherly affection
to us are of all
things most
sweet.

The Children of God are like to Cedars too, for they are Christ mysticall. Other men are as shrubs to them, men of no value, but they are Cedars, and grow as Cedars in Lebanon, from perfection to perfection, bearing most fruit in their age. Wicked men somtimes are Cedars too, and are said to grow and flourish as the Cedars in Lebanon: But looke a while, and you shall see their place no more, they have no good roort, no good foundation, *A Christian is a Cedar set in Christ the chiefe Cedar*, he is a plant that growes in him, he hath an eternall root, and therefore he flourisheth eternally.

His mouth is most sweet, he is altogether lovely.

His mouth is most sweet, she doubles this commendation, she had said before his lips are as Lillies dropping sweet myrrh, here she saith againe of his mouth, it is most sweet, to shew that that is the chiefelovelything in Christ, the repetition argueth the seriousnesse of the Churches affection to Christ, and of the excellency of that part. The main lovely thing is that which comes from his heart by his words and his lips, as indeed the most excellent thing that we can think of is the expression of the heart of God in Christ,

Christ, and of Christ's love to us, *His mouth is most sweet*. And indeed the best discovery of a true affection to Christ, and of a true estate in grace, is from our affection to the word of Christ. Wheresoever there is interest unto Christ, there is a high respect to the word, *My sheep heare my voice, John 10.* and you know what Peter saith, *John 6.* Many of Christ's hearers and followers forsooke him (upon some hard speeches, as they thought that came from him) faith Christ to Peter, *Will ye also leave me?* Peter answered againe, *Whether Lord shall we goe, thou hast the words of eternall life?* The Apostles that had the Spirit of God perceived an incredible graciousnesse to sit on his lips; and therefore they hung upon his lips, *Whether shall we goe, thou hast the words of eternall life?* If wee leave his speech we leave our comfort, we leave our life.

Ioh.6.68.

As a comment hereupon, see *Psal. 19.* Where we have a high commendation of Gods excellency: First from the booke of nature, the works of God, the Heavens declare the glory of God, then from the word of God, and herein the Psalmist is wondrous large. The Law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul, the testimonies of the Lord are sure making wise the simple, the statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart, the commandements of the Lord are sure, and enlighten the eyes, more to be desired then gold, yea then fine gold, sweeter also then the hony or the hony-combe.

S.B.R.XVII

*Quest.**When the word
of God is preci-
ous to us as gold**Ans/w.*

But marke the order, when is the word of God precious as gold, sweeter then the honey or the honey combe; but when the former commendation takes place, where the word is perfect converting the soule, and where it is sure, making wise the simple, and where the feare of the Lord is cleane, &c. There it is more to be desired then fine gold, and sweeter then the honey-combe. So the Church here finding first of all the word to be a converting word, and giving understanding to the simple, she cannot but speake of the sweetnesse of the word of Christ, his lips are as Lillies dropping sweet smelling myrrh, his mouth is most sweet. Thus a man may know his estate in grace by his relish of the word.

There is a divine and a heavenly relish in the word of God, as for instance take the doctrine of his providence, *That all things shall worke together for the best to them that love God.* What a sweet word is this, a whole kingdome is not worth this promise, That whatsoever befals a Christian in this world, there is an over-ruling providence to sway all to good, to help forward his eternall good.

That Christ will be present with us in all condicions, what a sweet word and promise is this, *That he will give his holy Spirit, if we beg it, that he will not fail us nor forsake us.* *That if we confess our sinnes and lay them open, he is mercifull to forgive them,* *That if our sinnes were as red as skarlet, they shall all be white as wooll.* What kind of incredibile

*That our state
in grace to the
word may bee
discerned by our
relish to the
word.*

Rom. 8.

Mat. 28.
Luk. 11. 13.

1 Joh. 1. 9.

Ifa. 1.

ble sweetnesse is in these to a heart that is prepared for these comforts, the doctrine of *Reconciliation*, of *Adoption*, of *Glory to come*, of the offices of Christ, and such like, how sweet are they, they relish wondrously to a sanctified soule.

Let us therefore discerne of our estate in grace by this, how doe we relish divine truths? are they connaturall and suitable to us? doe wee love them more then our appointed food? are they dearer unto us then thousands of gold and silver? doe we like them above all other truths whatsoever? Every truth in its ranke is lovely and is a beame of God: *For truth is of God where-soever we finde it*; but what are o her truths to this heavenly soule-saving truth, this Gospell-truth, that is from Christ, *his mouth is most sweet.*

In our nature there is a contrary disposition and Antipathy to divine truth. *We love the Law better then the Gospell, and any truth better then the Law.* We love a story, any trifling baubling thing concerning our ordinary callings better then divine truth. *In divine truth as things are more spirituall, so the more remote they are naturally from our love and liking.* Evangelicall truths will not downe with a naturall heart, such an one had rather heare a quaint point of some vice or vertue finely stood upon then any thing in Christ, because he was never truly convinced of his corrupt and miserable estate by nature; but when the grace of God hath altered him, and his eyes are open

Exhortation to try our state in grace by our relish of divine truths.

Psf. 119. 127.
Psal. 119 72.

That there is in our nature an Antipathy to divine truths.

SER. XVII

Luk 23.

Iob 33.23.

Rom.10.15.

Exod.34.
Isa.43.1.

Psal.51.

to see his misery, then of all truths the truth of Christ favours best: Those truths that come out of the mouth of Christ, and out of the ministry concerning Christ they are most sweet of all. Oh how sweet are those words in the Gospell to the poore man, *thy sinnes are forgiven thee*, doe you thinke they went not to his heart? So to the woman, Luk.7. her many sinnes are forgiven her, for she loved much, Oh they were words that went to her soule. And to the theefe on the crosse, *This day then shalt be with me in Paradice*, how doe you thinke those words affected him? So it is with us, if ever we have been abased in the sence of our sinnes, O how sweet is a promise of mercy then. *He that brings it is as one of ten thousand, that comes to declare to man his righteousness*, to lay open the mercy that belongs to a distressed soule, Oh the very feet of those that bring these glad tidings are beautifull; When our blessed Saviour after his resurrection spake to Mary, and called her by her name, after that she had sought him and could not find him (Oh Raboni, saith she) the words of Christ they melted her presently. Let Christ once call us by our names, for he knowes us by name, as he knew Moses, let him by his Spirit speake to us by name, and own us, then we call him Raboni, we owne him again, for what is our love but the reflection of his back againe? Therefore (saith the Psalmist) *Let me heare the voice of joy and gladnesse, that the bones that thou hast broken may rejoice*. Let me heare, that is, I long for thy word to heare it, not the bare

bare ministeriall word, but the word of the Spirit; but the Church resteth not here, but saith further,

He is altogether lovely.

Altogether desireable, as if he should say, what should I stand upon particulars, he is altogether from top to toe amiable, lovely and delectable.

He is altogether lovely.

Lovely to God, to us, to the soule ; lovely to him that can best judge of loveliness, the judgement of God I hope will goe currant with us, and what doth God the Father judge of Christ, *This is my Beloved Sonne*, he is the Son of Gods love, Col.1.13. (as God cannot but love his own Image) He is lovely also as man, for he was pure and holy, lovely as Mediator by office, for he was anointed by God to conveigh the Fathers love to us, *He must needs be lovely in whom all others are loved*, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, out of him I am well pleased with no body. And indeed he was filled with all graces that might make him lovely, all the treasures of wisedome are in him, and of his fulnesse we all receive grace for grace, he is made a storehouse of all that is good for us.

He is lovely to God in whatsoever he did, he carried himselfe lovely, and pleased his Father in all his doings and sufferings. God loved him especially, *Because he was obedient even unto the death of the crosse*, therefore God gave him a name above all names, that at the name of Jesus every knee

That Christ
every way con-
sidered is alto-
gether lovely.

Phil.2.

SER. XVII.

should bow both in Heaven and Earth. As for the Angels they looke upon him with admiration, they attened him, and accounted it an honour to wait upon him, he is lovely to all above us, and shall he not be lovely to us?

Obiect.

But you will say, was he lovely when he was nailed on the croffe, hung between two theeves, when he wore a crowne of thornes, was whipped, laid grovelling on the ground, when he sweat water and bloud, what loveliness was in him when he was laid in his grave?

Answ.

Oh yes then he was most lovely of all to us, By how much the more he was abased for us, this makes him more lovely, that out of love he would abase himselfe so low. When greatnesse and goodnesse meet together, how godly is it. That Christ so great a Majestie should have such bowels of compassion. Majestie alone is not lovely, but awefull and fearefull, but joyned with such condescension grace is wondrous amiable. How lovely a sight is it to see so great a person to be so meeke and gentle : it was so beyond comparison, lovely in the eyes of the Disciples, that they stood and wondred to see him who was the eternall word of the Father condescend to talke with a poore Samaritan woman: And what loveliness of carriage was in him to Peter undeserving after he had denied and forsworne him, yet to restore him to his former place that he had in his heart, loving him as much as ever he did before. In a word, what sweetnesse, gentlenesse, bowels of meeknesse, pitty and compassion, did he discover

to those that were in misery, we cannot insist upon particulars.

There is a remarkable passage in the story of *Alphonsus* the King (not very well liked of some) when he saw a poore man pulling of his beast out of a ditch he put to his hand to help him, after which, as it is recorded, his subjects ever loved him the better, it was a wonderfull condescension, and is it not as wonderfull that the King of Heaven and Earth should stoop so low as to help us poore wormes out of the ditch of hell and damnation, and that when he hath set us in a state of deliverance, he should not leave us there, but advance us to such a state and condition as is above our admiration, which neither heart can conceive, nor tongue expresse, is not this wonderfull condescending.

That we may further improve this point, Is Christ altogether lovely, so lovely to us, and so beloved of God the Father? Let us then rest upon his obedience and righteousness, build upon it that God cannot refuse that righteousness, whose subject is altogether lovely. Let us come clothed in the garments of our elder brother, and then doubt not of acceptance; for it is in Christ that he loves us, in *this welbeloved Sonne* it is that God is well pleased with us: If we put on Christs Righteousnesse, wee put on Gods Righteousnesse, and then how can God hate us, no more then he hates his owne Sonne; nay he loves us, and that with the same love wherewith he loves him, for he loves whole Christ mysti-

Use I.
That Christ is
such a Medi-
ator as can quit
his office.

John 17.23.

SER.XVII

call, head and members. Let this strengthen our Faith, that if Christ be so altogether lovely in himselfe and to the Father, then we may comfortably come before the Father, clothed with the garments of him our elder brother, and so rest our selves on the accepration of his Mediacion that is so beloved a Mediator.

Use 2.

To labour to be
in Christ, that
so we may bee
lovely before
God.

Againe, if Christ be so lovely (altogether lovely) then let us labour to be in him, that so we may be lovely to God, because he is the first amiable thing in the world, in whom wee are all lovely, all our loveliness is in beloved Christ.

Use 3.

To see then how
and whereupon
to spend our best
affections.

Againe, if Christ be so lovely, here onely we have whereupon to spend the marrow of our best affections. Is it not pitty wee should lose so much of our affections as we doe upon other things, Christ is altogether lovely, why should we dote upon other things so much, and set up Idols in our hearts above Christ? Is he altogether lovely, and shall not he have altogether our lovely affections, especially when we are commanded under paine of a curse to love the Lord Iesus. *Anathema Maranatha* to those that love not Christ. Let us therefore labour to place all our sweet affections that are to be exercised upon good, as love, joy, and delight, upon this object, this lovely deserving object Christ, who is altogether lovely. When we suffer a pure stremme as it were to run through a dirty channell, our affections to run after the things of the world, which are worse then our selves, we lose our affections and our selves.

Let therefore the whole streme of our affections be carried unto Christ. Love him and whatsoever is his; for he being altogether lovely, all that comes from him is lovely, his promises, his directions, his counsels, his children, his Sacraments are all lovely. Whatsoever hath the stamp of Christ upon it, let us love it, we cannot bestow our hearts better, to lose our selves in the love of Christ, and to forget our selves and the love of all, yea to hate all in comparison of him, and to account all dung and drosse compared with Christ, is the only way to find our selves. And indeed we have a better condition in him then in the world or in our selves : severed from him, our condition is vaine and will come to nothing ; but that we have in him is admirable & everlasting, we cannot conceive the happinesse which we poore wretches are advanced to in Christ, and what excellent things abide for us which come from the love of God to us in Christ, who is so altogether lovely. Therefore let us labour to kindle in our hearts an affection towards Christ, all that we can, considering that he is thus lovely.

And let us make an Use of Tryall, whether he be thus lovely to us or no, we may see hence whether we love Christ or no, We may judge of our love by our esteeme. How doe we value Christ ? what price doth the Church set on him ? *Hee is the chiefe of ten thousand.* What place then should he have in our hearts ? If he

Use.4.
*Whether or no
Christ be thus
lovely to us.*

I.
*By our esteeme
of Christ.*

SER.XVII

Psal.73.

be the chiefe of ten thousand, let us rather offend ten thousand then offend him. Let us say with David, whom have I in Heaven but thee, &c. And when the soule can say to Christ or any that is Christs (for I speake of him in the latitudo of his Truths, Promises, Sacraments, and Communion with his Children) *What have I in Heaven but thee, &c.* then it is in a happy condition. If these things have the same place in our esteeme, as they have in respect of their owne worth, then we may say truly without hypocrisie, *He is altogether lovely to us*, that we truly love him.

2.

By our sufferings for Christ.

In the next place, are we ready to suffer for Christ? We see the Church here endures any thing for Christ, she was misused of the watchmen, they scorned her, and her *vaile* is taken away, yet notwithstanding shee loves Christ still. Doe we stand ready disposed to suffer for Christ, of the world to be disgraced and censured, and yet are wee resolved not to give over, nay doe we love Christ the more, and sticke to his truth the faster? Certainly where the love of Christ is, there is a spirit of Fortitude, as we may see in the Church here, who is not discouraged from Christ by any meanes, he is still the chiefe of ten thousand, when she was wrorged for seeking after him, yet hee was altogether lovely, whereas on the other hand, you have some that for frownes of greatnessse, feare of losse, or for hope of rising, will warp their conscience and doe any thing.

Where

Where now is love to Christ and to Religion? He that loves Christ loves him the more for his crosse, as the Holy-Ghost hath recorded of some, that they rejoiced that they were thought worthy to suffer for Christ. So the more we suffer for him, the more deare he will be to us. For indeed he doth present himselfe in love and comfort most to those that suffer for his sake, therefore their love is increased.

Againe, where love is, there it enlargeth the heart, which being enlarged enlargeth the tongue also. The Church hath never enough of commanding Christ, and of setting out his praise, *the tongue is loosed, because the heart is loosed.* Love will alter a mans disposition, as we see in experience, a man base of nature, Love will make him liberall, he that is tongue-tied, it will make him eloquent, let a man love Christ, and though before he could not speake a word in the commendation of Christ, and for a good cause, yet (I say) if the love of Christ be in him, you shall have him speake and labour earnestly in the praises of God. This hot affection, this heavenly fire, will so mould and alter him, that he shall be cleane another man, as wee see in the Church here, after that there was kindled a spirit of love in her, she cannot have done with Christ, when she had spoke what she could, she adds, *he is altogether lovely.* Those that cannot speake of Christ, or for Christ with large hearts in defence

3.
Love enlargeth
the heart and
tongue in the
praises of Christ

fence of good causes (but are tongue-tied and cold in their affections) where is their love? put any worldly man to a worldly theame that he is exercised in, and speaks of daily, he hath wit and words at will, but put him to a theame of piety, you lose him, he is out of his theame, and out of his element. But tis not so with those that have ever felt the love of God in Christ, they have large affections: How full is Saint Paul, he cannot speake of Christ but he is in the height, breadth, length, and depth of the love of God in Christ, and the knowledge of God above all knowledge: Thus we may discerne the truth of our love by the expressions of it here, as in the Church.

4.
True love is
never at rest
till we find
Christ.

Againe, the Church here is never content till she find Christ, whatsoever she had, nothing contents her, she wanted her beloved, as we see here, she goes up and downe inquisitive after him till she find him: so it is with a Christian, if he have lost (by his owne fault) his former communion with Christ, he will not rest nor be satisfied, but searcheth here and there in the use of this and that meanes, hee runs through all Gods Ordinances and means till he find Christ, nothing in the world will content him, neither honour, riches, place, or friends, till he find that which he once enjoyed, but hath now for a season lost, the comfort and assurance of Gods love in Christ.

That content-
ment without
Heavens sweet
report of com-
fort to the soule
is a dangerous
condition.

Now if we can sit downe with other things, and can want Christ and the assurance of salvation,

tion, that sweet report of the Spirit, that we are his, and yet be contented well enough, here is an ill signe, that a man is in an ill condition, the Church was not so disposed here, she was never quiet, nor gives over her inquisition and speaking of Christ, that by speaking of the object, she might warme her affections, untill at the last she meets with Christ, these and the like signes there are of the truth of the love of Christ. But where there is a flaming love of Christ, there is this degree further, a desire of the appearance of Christ, a desire of his presence : For if Christ be so lovely in his Ordinances : If wee finde such sweetnesse in the Word and Sacraments, in the communion of Saints, in the motions of the Spirit. What is the sweetnesse (thinke you) which the soules in Heaven enjoy, where they see Christ face to face, see him as he is? hereupon the Spouse faith, *Let him kisse me with the kis ses of his mouth :* O that I might live in his presence, this is the desire of a Christian soule. When the flame of love is kindled in any strength, O that I might see him, and therefore it longs even for death ; for as farre as a man is spirituall, he desires to be dissolved, and to be with Christ, as *Simeon*, when he saw him (though in his abasement) *Now I have enough, let thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.* The presence of Christ (though it were but in the wombe) when *Mary* the mother of Christ came to *Elizabeth*, it caused the Babe

*A signe of true
flaming love to
Christ.*

SER.XVII

Babe that was in her wombe to spring. Such comfort there is in the presence of Christ (though he be but in the wombe) as it made *John* to spring. What then shall be his presence in H aven, how would it make the heart spring there thinke you ? For that which is most lovely in Christ is to come. Therefore the Saints that have any degree of grace in the New Testament, they are set out by this description, they were such as loved the appearing of our Lord Iesus Christ : how can it be otherwise if they love Christ, they love the appearing of Christ, wherein we shall be made lovely, as he is lovely.

That our many infirmities and sins should make us long for that time wherein we shall be altogether lovely.

To try our affections by the Churches affections

Here we are not altogether lovely, for we have many dregs of sinne, many infirmities and staines, shall we no: then desire that time wherein as he is altogether lovely, so shill wee be made a fit Spouse for so glorious a husband.

To conclude this point, let us try our affections by the Churches affections in this place, whether Christ be so lovely to us or not, *Isa.50.* 3. it is said there is no beauty in him, when we shall see him, and he was despised of men, hee was so in regard of his crosse, and sufferings to the eye of the world, and of carnall men. *Herod* scorned him when *Pilat* sent him to him, made no body of him (as the word in the Originall is) they looked upon the outside of Christ in the flesh when he was abased. *There was no forme nor beauty in him* (saith the Holy-Ghost) that is to the sight of carnall men;

men ; but those that had the sight of their sinnes with spirituall eyes, they could otherwise judge of Christ. The poore Centurion, saw an excellency in him, when he said, *Hee was not worthy that hee shold come under his roose.* The poore theefe saw the excellency of Christ upon the Crosse in those torments, *Lord remember me when thou commest into thy Kingdome.*

So those soules that were enlightened, that had the sight of their misery, and the sight of Gods love in Christ , had a high esteeme of Christ in his greatest abasement ; therefore if we have a meane esteeme of the children of God as contemptible persons, and of the Ordinances of God as meane things, and of the government of Christ (such as he hath left in his word) as base, it is an argument of a sinfull unworthy disposition in such a soule, Christ hath never been effectually by his Spirit ; for every thing in him is lovely, even the bitterest thing of all. There is a majesty and excellency in all things of Christ , the censures of the Church are excellenter, when they proceed and issue forth with judgement, as they should doe, to deliver such a man over to Satan, that hee may be saved in the day of the Lord.

Now if the Ordinances of Christ, the Word and Sacraments , and the shutting sinners out of the Church, if these things be vilified as powerless things, it shewes a degenerate wicked heart, not acquainted with the wayes of God.

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God. If we have a meane esteeme of men that suffer for Christ, and stand out for him : If we account them so and so, shall we thinke our seives Christians in the mean time? when Christ is altogether lovely, shall they bee unlovely that carry the Image of Christ ? Can we love him that begets and hate them that are begotten of him ? Can we love Christ and hate Christians? it cannot be.

*How to get an
esteeme of
Christ.*

I.
*To make sin
bitter.*

Quest

Ans.

*To attend on
the meanes of
salvation.*

Now that wee may get this affection and esteeme of Christ that is so lovely. Let us labour to make our sinnes bitter and loathsome, that Christ may be sweet.

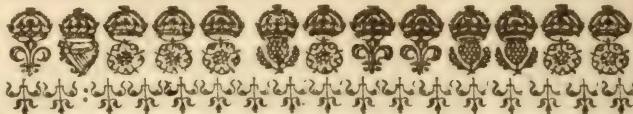
*What is the reason we set no higher a price of
Christ?*

Because we judge not of our selves, as we are indeed, and want spirituall eye-salve to see into our selves rightly.

*And let us attend upon the meanes of salvation,
to heare the unsearchable riches of Christ.* What makes any man lovely to us? but when we heare of their riches, beauty, and good intent to us. In the Word we are made acquainted with the good intent of Christ towards us, the riches of mercy in forgiving our sinnes, and riches of glory prepared for us : The more we heare of him, of his riches and love to us, the more it will inflame our love to Christ. Those that live where the Ordinances of Christ are held forth with life and power, they have more heavenly and enlarged affections then others have, as the experience of Christians will testifie.

Again,

Againe, if we would esteeme highly of Christ that he may be lovely to us, let us joyne with company that highly esteeme of Christ, and such as are better then our selves. What deads the affections so much as carnall, worldly company, who have nothing in them but civility, by converse with them who have discourse of nothing but the world : If a man have heavenly affe&ctions, he shall quickly dull them, and be in danger to lose them : they may be conversed with in civill things ; but when we would set to be heavenly, and holy minded, let us converse with those that are of an heavenly bent ; as we see here, *The daughters of Ierusalem* are won to love Christ ? by what ? By conversing with the Church, upon the discourse that the Church makes of his excellencies in particular, they begin to aske where is Christ ? as in the next Chapter, and so are all brought to the love of Christ.



The eighteenth Sermon.

CANT. V. XVI.

*His mouth is most sweet, yea he is altogether lovely,
this is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daugh-
ters of Ierusalem.*

CANT. VI. I, II.

*Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among
women, whither is thy Beloved turned aside that
we may seeke him with thee.
My Beloved is gone downe, &c.*

By this time the Church hath well quit her selfe in that safe subiect, commanding her Beloved, first in generall, and then in particular; she affirmes (in effect) there was none like him in generall, which she after makes good in all the particulars of her description, now she summes up all with a kinde of superabouadant expression. *What shall I say more of him ? if that which is said be not enough, then know further, he is altogether lovely, there were no end to goe through all his perfections ; but looke on him wholly, he is alto-
gether lovely, and therefore deserves my love ; so
that*

that there is no cause why you should wonder at the strength of my affections, and care to find out this my Beloved and this my friend, O ye daughters of Ierusalem. Thus we see how the pitch of an enlightened soule is bent, it aspires to things suitable to its selfe, to Godward, to union and communion with Christ, to supernaturall objects, nothing here below is worthy the name of its beloved. It fastens not on earthly base things, but this is my beloved, and this is my friend, this so excellent a person, this *Iedidiah*, this beloved sonne, this Judge of all, Lord of all, this chiefe of ten thousand ; Here the Church pitches her affecti-
ons, which she conceales not as ashamed thereof, but in a kind of triumphing, boasting of her choice, she concludes all with a kind of resolute assurance, that the object of this her choice is far beyond all comparison.

*This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O daugh-
ters of Ierusalem.*

Which is the closing up of her commendati-
ons of Christ, *This is my Beloved, and this is my
friend, &c.* Which shall only be touched, because we had occasion to speake thereof before. She calls Christ her beloved, howsoever he had withdrawne himselfe in regard of the comfort and communion she had with him before, yet he is her beloved still.

That which is specially to be stood upon, is, that the Church here doth set out not on-
ly in parcels, but in generall her beloved Christ : this is my Beloved, shee doth as it

SER.XVIII

Observ.

Divers ends
why the Church
thus in general
and particular
setts forth the
excellency of
Christ.

1.
To shew how
just it is to re-
spect so excel-
lent a person.

2.
To justifie her
strong affection
to the stronger
Christians.

3.
To boast and
glory in God.

were boast in her Beloved : whence observe,
*A Christian soule seemes to glory as it were in
Christ.*

*This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O ye
daughters of Ierusalem: But to unfold more fully
this point, there be three or foure ends why the
Church thus stands upon the expressing of the
excellencies of Christ in particular and in gene-
rall.*

The one, *To shew that it is most just that she should
love and respect him in whom there is all this to de-
serve love, both in himselfe, in regard of his owne ex-
cellencies, so, and in relation to us, in regard of his me-
rits and deserts.*

Secondly, *To justifie her large affections before
the world and all opposites : For the world thinks,
what meanethese who are called Christians to
haunt the exercises of Religion, to spend so
much time in good things, they wonder at it for
want of better information ; Now the Church
here to justifie her large expressions, sayes, this
is my Beloved, this is my friend, O ye daughters of
Ierusalem.*

And not only to justifie, but likewise to glory
therein, as you have it, *Psal. 44.8. the Church
there boasts of God, I will make my boast of thee
all the day long. So that Christians may not onely
justifie their course of life against enemies, but in
some sort boast of Christ, as Paul oft doth, and
he shewes the reason of it, that God hath made
Christ to us all in all, wisdom, righteousness, san-
ctification, and redemption, that whosoever glo-
rieth*

rieth might glory in the Lord; for is it not a matter of glorying in the Church when she hath such a head and such a husband? *This is my beloved*, the wife shines in the beames of her husband, therefore this yeelds matter not onely of justification but of glory.

And next in the fourth place, the Church is thus large and shuts up all with a repetition, this is my beloved. *To enlarge her owne affections, and to feed her owne love.* For love feeds upon this fuell (as it were) upon expressions and meditations of the person or thing loved. Love is as it were wages of it selfe, the paines it takes is gaine to it selfe, to the Church here it is an argument pleasing, she dilates upon a copious Theame. I may truly say there is no greater comfort to a Christian, nor a readier way to enlarge the affections after Christ, then to speake oft of the excellencies of Christ, to have his tongue as the pen of a ready writer furnished this way, *This is my Beloved, &c.*

In the fifth place, another end of this may be *to aggravate her owne shame*, as indeed Gods children are much in this argument, that upon their second thoughts of Christs worthinesse, and therewithall reflecting upon their owne unworthiness and unkindnesse they may relish Christ the better. Therefore the Church here that it might appeare to her selfe for her humiliation how unkind she had bin to shut the doore against Christ when he knocked, whereupon he deservedly did withdraw himselfe and made her seek

4.
*To enlarge her
owne affections*

*That love is
wages to it self.*

*To aggravate
her owne shame
and unkindnesse
in so slighting
Christs love.*

him so long sorrowing, Itell you sayes she what a kind of beloved he is, thus and thus excellent. How did the consideration of Gods kindeste and love melt Davids heart after that horrible sinne in the matter of *Friah*, and the sweet looks of Christ upon Peter, that had been so unkinde, melted him. So here the Church when she considered how unkind she had been to Christ her beloved, so incomparably excellent above other beloveds, to let him stand at the doore, till his lockes were wet with the dew of the night. The consideration hereof made her ashamed of her selfe : what so excellent, so deserving a person as my beloved isto me, to be used of me so ? what indignity is this ? Thus to raise up the aggravation of her unkindnesse, no question but the Church takesthis course ; for Gods children are not as untoward worldlings and hypocrites, afraid to search and to understand themselves, the childe of God loves to be well read in his owne heart and unworthy wayes ; therefore he layes all the blame he can upon himselfe every way, he knowes he loseth nothing by this ; for there is more mercy in Christ then there is sinne in him, and the more sinne abounds in his owne feeling, the more grace shall abound, he knowes the mystery of Gods carriage in this kind. Therfore for this end(amongst the rest)she sayes, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend*, whom I have so unkindly used.

And the last reason why the Church is thus large was, *To draw and wind up the affections of those*

those well meaning Christians that were commers on, who were inquisitive of the way to Zion. O ye daughters of Ierusalem, that you may know that there is some cause to seeke after Christ more then you have done before : I tell you what an excellent person my beloved is, to whet their affections more and more : And wee see the successe of this excellent discourse in the beginning of the next Chapter, *Whether is thy Beloved gone, &c.*

These and the like reasons there are of the large expressions of the Church of the excellencies of Christ, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, Oh ye daughters of Ierusalem.* But wee will single out of these reasons for Use that which I thinke fittest for us to make Use of.

Let us then oft think of the excellencies of Christ for this end , to justifie our endeavours and paines we take in the exercises of Religion, and to justifie Gods people from the false imputations of the world that they lay upon them, as if they were negligent in other matters, and were too much busied in spirituall things. You see how large the Church is in setting out the excellencies of her Beloved, and then she shuts vp all (being able to say no more) justifying our cause, *This is my Beloved, & this is my friend.* Do you wonder that I seeke so much after him then : or wonder you at Christians, when they take such paines to keep their communion with Christ in a holy walking with, and depending upon God. These

Mat. 11. 19.

are no wonders, if you consider how excellent Christ is, what he hath done for us, and what he keeps for us in another world, that he will preserve us to his heavenly kingdome, till he put us into possession of that glorious condition that he hath purchased. Let the hearts of men dwell upon the consideration of these things, and then you shall see that Gods children are rather to be blamed that they are no more carefull, watchfull, and industrious, then to be taxed that they are so much. Our Saviour Christ said, *Mat. 11. 19.* Wisedome is justified of all her children. If you will make good that you are children of wisedome, you must be able to justifie the wisedome of God every way, to justifie your reading, hearing, your communion of Saints, to justifie all the exercises of Religion from an experimentall taste and sweetnesse of them (as the Church doth here) *This is my Beloved.* What sayes *Joshua*, this choice I have made, doe you what you will it matters me not, but *I and my house will serve the Lord.* So *Paul* makes a voluntary profession of his affection, *Rom. 1. 2.* *I am not ashamed of the Gospell of Iesus Christ,* let the Gospell be entertained in the world as it will, and let others think of me as they will, that I am forward in the preaching of it, I am not ashamed of it, and good reason he had not to be ashamed, for *it is the power of God to salvation to all that beleieve,* yea the saving power to us, and have not I cause to stand in the defence of it ; and so he saith the *2 Tim. 1. 12.* *I know whom I have beleived, &c.* I am not

2 Tim 1.11.

not ashamed to suffer bonds for his sake. Though the world thought him a meane person, I will not be scorned out of my Faith and Religion by shallow empty persons, that know not what Christ and Religion meaneth. No, *I know whom I have beleived, he is able to keep that that I have committed to him against that day.* Let us theretore be able to justifie from a judicious apprehension sweet divine truths. You see what justifications there are of the Church of God: *Wherfore should the Heathen say, where is now their God?* and *Psalme 42.10.* Oh it went to Davids heart, when they said where is now their God? what is become of his God when he was left in trouble, as the Church here, and what doth she answer? doth he let it goe with a question? No sayes he, our God is in Heaven and hath done whatsoever he pleased.

And this justification of Religion you may know by this signe, it is with the disertion of all discourses opposite to Religion whatsoever, he that justifies the truth, he esteemes meanly of other courses and discourses. Therefore in the next verse the Church vilifies the Idols, our God is in Heaven, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth: the Idols are silver and gold, the worke of mens hands, they have eyes and see not, eares and heare not. And the more we justifie Christ, the more we will be against Antichrist and his Religion, we may know the owning of the one truth by the vilifying the other. Let us labour therefore to grow to such a convincing knowledge

Psal.113.3.

The justification of religious endeavours is with disertion of opposite courses.

SER.XVIII ledge of Christ, the good things in him, and the wayes of God, as we may be able to stand out against all opposition of the gates of hell whatsoever.

To grow to
know Christ
more, and his
good things, we
must grow in
admiration of
them.

We must pray
for the Spirit of
Revelation.

That if worldly
and wicked men
boast of earthly
things, much
more ought we
of our portion in
Christ.

Psal. 32.1.

And to this end proceed in the study of Christ, and to a deeper search of him, and of the excellencies and good things in him, that we may say as *Micah* 7. Who is a God like to thee, that pardons sinnes and iniquities: And as *David*, *Psal. 113*. Who is a God like our God that humbleth himselfe to behold the things done here below.

And desire also to this purpose the Spirit of revelation, that which *Paul* prayes for, *Ephes.* 1. and *Cap. 3*. that we may know that knowledge that is above all knowledge, the height, depth, and breadth of Gods love in Christ. So sweet is God in the greatest abasements of his children, that he leaves such a taste in the soule of a Christian, that from thence he may be able to say, this is my beloved, when his beloved seems not to care for him. When the Church seemed to be disrespected and neglected of Christ, yet she sayes, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend, O ye daughters of Jerusalem.*

Shall rich men boast of their riches? shall men that are in favour boast of the favour of great persons? shall a man that hath large possessions boast and thinke himselfe as good and as great as his estate is? shall a base minded worldling be able to boast? Why boastst thou thy self, O mighty man? Nay you shall have malignant Spirited men boast

boast of their malignant destructive power, I can doe this and that mischiefe, shall a man boast of mischiefe that he is able to doe mischiefe? and hath not a Christian more cause to boast in God and in salvation? Lord shine on me sayes *David*, let me enjoy the light of thy countenance, and that shall bring me more joy then they have, when their corne and wine increaseth: know this, as he goes on in the same Psalme, that God acceptis the righteous man.

Therefore let us thinke we have much more cause to boast of God and of Christ in a spirituall maner, then the worldling hath of the world. Is not God and Christ our portion? and having Christ, have we not all things with Christ? put case all things be tooke from us, if a man have Christ, he is rich though he have nothing else; if he have all without him, His plenty is (as a Father saith, and as it is in truth) beggery. But whosoever hath Christ may thus rejoice with *David*, *The lot is fallen to me in pleasant places, yea I have a goodly heritage.* Would ye have more then God in Christ, a Ring with a Diamond very precious in it. Now the *Daughters of Ierusalem* hearing this large expression of affection, aske,

SER.XVIII

Psal 47.

That Christ reconciled is the best portion.

Psal 16.7.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI. I.

Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside that we may seeke him with thee?



Ere is another Question, the first which the *daughters of Ierusalem* aske is, *what is thy Beloved?* Wherupon the Church tooke occasion to expresse what her beloved was, upon her expression closing up all with this generall, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend.*

*That a discove-
ry of Christ's ex-
cellencie must
needs set us a
worke how to
have him.*

Then the second Question is, *Whither is thy Beloved gone?* One question begets another, and indeed if this question be well satisfied what is Christ above others, this will follow againe, where is he? how shall I get him? how shall I seeke him? what is the reason this second question is seldom made? *Whither is he gone? how shall I get Christ?* Because the former question, namely, *What is Christ?* is so seldom made: For if we did once know what Christ is, we would be sure with the *daughters of Ierusalem* to aske whither is he gone, that we may seeke him with thee.

*Obseru.
That grace be-
gets grace, the
flame once kind-
led will not out
but be a burning
and growing.*

We see here is a growth in the desires of the *Daughters of Ierusalem*, whence wee learne,

*That grace, though it be in never so little propor-
tion at the first, it is growing still.*

From

From the first question, *What is thy Beloved?* Here is a second (upon better information) *Whither is thy Beloved gone, that we may seeke him with thee?* Nothing is lesse then grace at the first, nothing in the world so little in proportion. The Kingdome of Heaven is compared to a graine of mustard-seed, that is, the woike of grace in the heart, as well as in the preaching of the Gospell, in the beginning is little. It is true of the worke of grace, as well as of the word of grace, that it is like a graine of mustard-seed at first, *What is thy Beloved* enquires the Church at first; but when she heares of the excellency of Christ, then *whither is thy Beloved gone?* Grace begets grace, there is a connexion and knitting together in Religion, good things beget good things: It is a strange thing in Religion, how great a matter ariseth of a little beginning. The woman of *Samaria* had but a small beginning of grace, and yet she presently drew many of her neighbours to beleeve in Christ. So *Andrew, John 1.* As soone as he was converted he finds his brother *Simon*, and tels him that he had found the *Messias*, and so brings him to Christ; and *Philip* as soon as he had got a sparke of Faith himselfe, hee drawes also *Nathaniell* to come to Christ. *Pauel* speaks of his bonds, how the noise of them was in *Cæsars Court*, and many beleaved the very report, which howsoever it is not a working cause, yet it may be a preparing, inducing, leading cause to such things, from one thing to another, till there follow this change and full conversion.

You

Mat. 13.

Phil. 1.13.

SER. XVIII
An error of the
Papists touch-
ing the efficacy
of grace in con-
gruity.

That the means
without a di-
stinct confir-
mation of
worke can doe
nothing.

Deut. 29. 4.
That usually
God works
with the means.

You see here the *daughters of Jerusalem* growing ; therefore let us labour to be under good meanes. Some of the Romists and others which are ill affected and grounded in that point, they thinke that the efficacy of grace is, as we call it from the congruity, fitnesse, and proportion of the meanes to the heart and will of man, and thereupon God converts one and not another, because there is a congruous and fit offering of meanes to him, when he is fitly disposed , and another is not fitly disposed ; therefore there followes not upon it effectuall calling , so that the vertue of the meanes offered depends upon suitableness and fitnesse in the party to whom the means are offred, and not upon the power and blessing of God, verily this is plausible , and goes downe very roundly with many weake persons ; but this is a false and a grosse error ; for unlesse God by his holy Spirit doe worke by the meanes, no planting and watering will bring any increase and change the heart and mind, though there were greater means in Christ's time, when he wrought these miracles then any time before, yet all those could not convert that foward generation : And it was *Moses* complaint in the wilderness, where they had abundance of meanes, God hath not given you a heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and eares to heare untill this day. When a man is planted under good meanes, and frequents them, then ordinarily it pleaseth God by the inward workings of his owne powerfull Spirit to worke great matters ; and those that keep out of Gods reach,

reach, that will not come into places where they may heare good things, there is no hope of them, though there be many ill fish in the net, yet there is no hope to catch them that are without the net. So those that are kept out of all opportunities and occasions whereby Gods Spirit may worke upon them, there is no hope of them.

Let us learne this heavenly wisedome to advantage our selves this way, by improving all good opportunities whatsoever whereby wee may learne, for God works by outward meanes : good company, and good discourse, these breed excellent thoughts. As therefore we love our soules, take all advantages wherein the Spirit of God works, we shall find incredible fruit therof, more then we would beleeve. But to come to the Question.

See here first of all in this Question, the blessed successe of the Churches enquiry after Christ in the *daughters of Ierusalem*; after they heard the large explications of the excellencies of Christ, especially by the Church, whom they had a good conceit of, for they call her, *the fairest among women*.

And seeing likewise the confidence of the Church, she standsto it, *this is my Belov'd*, yea also eagernes in the Church to seeke after him, they would seeke him with her, so that where these meet, a large unfolding of the truth of God, and that by persons that are knowne to be good, well accepted and conceited of, and where

That demonstrative affecti-
onate confident
explication of
Christ, is never
without won-
drous successse.

SER.XVIII

where there is a large demonstration of reall affection, and the things are spoken of with confidence, as knowing what they say, the word (I say) so managed, it is never without wondrous successe.

1. For in the course of reason, what can I have to say, considering the person who speaks is an excellent person, he is wiser and holier then I, he takes to heart these things, and shall not I affect that which those that have better parts and graces doe?
2. Then withall I see not onely excellent persons doe it, but I see how earnest they are, surely there is some matter in it; for persons so holy, so wise, and gracious to be so earnest, surely either they are too blame, or I am too dull and too dead, but I have most cause to suspect my selfe.
3. And to see them carried with a spirit of confidence, as if they were well enough advised when they deliver this (*this is my Beloved*) in particular, and then to shut up all in generall, *This is my Beloved, and this is my friend*: I say, when there is grace and life in the heart, and earnestnesse with confidence, this together with the explication of the heavenly excellencies of Christ, and of Religion, it hath admirable successe, as here in the Church, *the fairest among women, the daughters of Jerusalem*, seeing the Church was so earnest, confident and so large in the explication of the excellencies of Christ, see how it works, it drawes out this Question with resolution, they joyne

joyne with the Church in seeking Christ. Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women? whither is thy Beloved turned aside, that we may seeke him with thee? Where by the way observe, as the Church before doubles it, This is my Beloved, and this is my friend: so they answer with a double question, Whither is thy Beloved gone? whither is he turned aside, O thou fairest among women, &c. From this appellation note, If we would be happy instruments to convert others, being converted our selves, labour to be such as the world may thinke to be good and gracious, O thou fairest among women: Faire in the robes of Christ tooke out of his wardrobe : All the beauty and ornaments that the Church hath, shee hath from Christ, let us labour to be such as the world may conceite good persons. We say of Physitians, when the patient hath a good conceit of them the cure is halfe wrought: So the Doctrine is half perswaded, when there is a good conceit of the speaker.

Againe, labour to be earnest. If wee would kindle others, we must be warmed our selves: If we would make others weep, we must weep our selves. Naturalists could observe this, the Church spake this with large expressions, indeed more then can be exprest. Let us labour to be deeply affected with what we speake, and speake with confidence, as if we knew what we spoke, as the Apostle John doth in the beginning of his Epistle to bring others to be better perswaded of his Doctrine: He affirmeth that which was

How to be happy instruments to convert others

To be such as the world may thinke to bee good and gracious.

To be earnest in those things we would inforce upon others.

SER.XVIII

1 John 1.1.

2 Pet.1.16.

Observ.

*That we ought
to bee in love
with the mini-
stry of the
word, whereby
the excellency
of Christ is set
forth.*

Prov.10 20,

from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with these our eyes, which we have looked upon, and these hands of ours have handled of the Word of Life he delivered to them.

For when we are confident from spirituall experience, it is wonderfull how we shall be instruments of God to gaine upon others. So Peter, we followed not (sayes he) deceivable fables, when we opened unto you the power and comming of our Lord Iesus Christ, but with our eyes we saw his Majesty.

Doe not thinke it belongs onely to the Ministry, there is an art of Conversion that belongs to every one that is a growne Christian to win others.

Whither is thy Beloved gone, O thou fairest among women?

The next observation out of the words (because it is the especiall) which works upon the daughters of Ierusalem, is from the large explication of Christ.

That which most of all stirs up holy affections to search after Christ is the large explication of his excellencies.

Then be in love with the Ministry of the Gospell, and the Communion of Saints, who have their tongues and their hearts taught of God to speake excellently, their tongues are as refined silver, their hearts are enriched to increase the communion of Saints. Marke this one excellency of that excellent ordinance of God in

in Christ, whereof Paul saith, *Ephes.3.* To me is committed this excellent office to lay open the unscarable riches of Christ, such riches as may draw you to wonder, such as eye hath never seene, nor eare heard, nor hath entred into the heart of man to conceive, and so to draw the affections of people after them.

And because it is the speciall office of the Ministry to lay him open, to hold up the tapistry, to unfold the hidden mysteries of Christ, labour we therefore to be alway speaking somewhat about Christ or tending that way, when we speak of the Law, let it drive us to Christ, when of Morall duties, to teach us to walke worthy of Christ. Christ, or somewhat tending to Christ should be our theame and marke to aym at.

Therefore what shall we judge of those that are hinderers of this glorious ordinance of Christ in the Gospell, they are enemies of conversion, and of the calling of Gods people, enemies of their comfort : and what shall we thinke of those wretched and miserable creatures, that like Cain are vagabonds, who wander and will not submit themselves to any ordinance meekly, but keep themselves out of this blessed opportunity of hearing the excellencies of Christ, which might draw their hearts to him : we are made for ever, if Christ and we be one ; if we have all the world without him it is nothing, if we have nothing in the world but Christ, we are happy. Oh happy then when this match is made

That because
the speciaall of-
fice of the mi-
nistry is to un-
fold Christ,
therefore all our
discourses should
tend this way in
some sort.

between Christ and the soule, the friends of the Bride and of Christ, they laying open the unsearchable riches of Christ to the Spouse, draw the affections, work faith, and so bring the Bride and the Bridegroome together.

Thus farre of the Question, now wee have the Churches answer to the *daughters of Ierusalem*.

My Beloved is gone into his Garden, to the beds of Spices, to feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies.

The Question was not for a bare satisfaction, but from a desire the Church had to seek Christ, whither is thy beloved gone that we may seeke him. It was not a curious question, but a question of inquisition tending to practise. Many are inquisitive, but when they know another mans meaning, it is all they desire : now I know your meaning will they say, but I meane not to follow your counsell. The *daughters of Ierusalem* had a more sincere intention, *O thou fairest among women, whither is thy beloved turned aside, that we may seeke him with thee ?* whereunto the Church answered,

My Beloved is gone into his Garden to the beds of Spices to feed in the Gardens, Where we lee,

The Church is not squemish, but directly answers to the question, for there is no envy in spirituall things, because they may be divided in solidum, one may have as much as another, and all alike. Envy is not in those things that are not divisible in other things, the more one hath, another

That there ought to be no envy in spirituall things which may in solidum be divided alike to all.

another hath the lesse. But there is no envy in grace and glory, because all may share alike; therefore here is no envy in the answer ; as if she denied the *daughters of Jerusalem* the enjoying of her beloved ; no if you will know (saves she) I will tell you directly whither my beloved is gone.

*My Beloved is gone into his Garden to the bed of
spices. &c.*

God hath two gardens, the Church Catholike is his garden, and every particular Church are gardens and beds of spices, in regard that many Christians are sowne there that Christ's soule delights in, as in sweet spices. This was spoken of before at large in *Chapter 5. 1.* why the Church is called a garden being a severed place from the wast : the Church is severed from the wildernes of the world in Gods care and love , likewise hee tends and weeds his Church and garden: as for the wast of the world, he is content the wildernes should have barren plants : but he will not endure such in his garden ; therefore those that give themselves liberty to be naught in the Church of God, he will have a time to root them out : Trees that are not for fruit, shall be for the fire, and above all other Trees their doome shall be the heaviest that grow in Gods garden without fruit, that fig-tree shall be cursed.

Men are pleased with answering the bill of accusation against them thus, are we not baptiz'd ? and doe we not come to Church ? &c. what doe

SER.XVIII

Heb 6.

Deut. 31.32

you make of us , yet they are abominable swearers and filthy in their lives. To such I say, the more God hath lift you up, and honoured you in the use of the meanes, the more just shall your damnation be , that you bring forth nothing but briers and brambles , the grapes of *Sodome* , and the vine of *Gomorrah* : heavy will the doome be of many that live in the Churches bosome, to whom it had been better to have been borne in *America*, in *Turkey*, or in the most barbarous parts in the world : they have a heavy account to make that have beene such ill proficients under abundance of meanes, therefore it ought to be taken to heart.

That Christ looks for Lillies to plant them in his garden, de light in them, and transport them into Heaven.

Two Paradises.

My Beloved is gone into his garden to the beds of spices, to feed in the Gardens, and to gather Lillies.

That is, having first planted them Lillies here, to gather them, and to transport them out of the garden here, to the garden in Heaven, where there shall be nothing but lillies. For the Church of God hath two Gardens or Paradises since the first Paradise (whereof that was a resemblance) the Paradise of the Church , and the Paradise of Heaven. As Christ saith to the good cheefe, *this day thou shalt be with me in Paradise*. So those that are good plants in the Paradise of the Church, they shall be glorious plants also in the Paradise of Heaven : Wee must not alway be here, we shall change our soyle, and be taken into Heaven : *He is gone into his Garden to gather Lillies.*

Chri-

Christians are compared to Lillies for their purity and whitenesse unspotted in justification, and for their endeavours in sanctity and holiness, wherein also at length they shall be wholly unspotted, it is the end (*Ephes. 1.4.*) they are chosen too, to be holy without blame before him in love. God and Christ looks upon them without blame, not as they are here defiled and spotted, but as they intend by little and little to purge and purifie themselves by the Spirit that is in them, that they may be altogether without blame. They are Lillies being cloathed with the white garments of Christs righteousness, not having a naturall whitenesse and purity : the whitenesse and purity of Gods children is borrowed, all their beauty and garments are taken out of anothers wardrobe, the *Church is all-glorious within* ; but she borrowes her glory, as the Moone borrowes all her light from the Sun : the Churches excellency is borrowed, it is her owne but by gift, but being once her owne it is her own for ever.

The Church before was likened to a garden culled out, an *Eden*, a Paradise : Now there you know were foure streames, sweet and goodly rivers which watered Paradise, the heads of which rivers were without it. So the Church of God, her graces are her owne, that is, the Spirit of God comes through her nature, purgeth and purifieth it ; but the spring of those graces(as in Paradise) is out of her selfe.

And then the Lilly is a tall goodly plant, ther-

S E R . XVIII

1.

In what respects Christians are compared to Lillies for purity, whitenesse, and unspottedness.

2.

Because it is a tall goodly plant.

Dan. xi. 31.

fore the Church is compared to them. Other men are compared to thornes, not onely for a noxious, hurtfull quality in them, but for their basenesse likewise : What are thornes good for, but to cumber the ground, to eat out the heart of it, to hide snakes, and for the fire. Wicked men are not Lillies but thornes, they are base meane persons. *Antiochus* is said to be a vile person though he were a King, because he was a naughty man. Wicked men though they be never so great, being void of the grace of God are vile persons, though wee must respect them in regard of their places ; yet as they are in their qualification , they are vile and base thornes; but the Church is not so, but as a Lilly among thornes , that is, among vile and abominable persons.

Use I.
comfort Gods
children.

The Use is to comfort Gods children, they have an excellency and glory in them, which howsoever it is not from them, yet it is theirs by gift and eternally theirs; therefore let them comfort themselves against all the censures of sinfull persons, that labour to trample them under foot, and thinke basely and meanly of them, as of the off-scouring of the world. Let the unworthy world thinke of them as they will, they are Lillies in Gods esteem, and are so indeed, glorious persons that have the Spirit of glory resting upon them, and whom the world is not worthy of, though their glory be within ; therefore let us glory in it, that God vouchsafeth saving grace to us above any other priviledge.

1 Pet. 4.
Heb 11.

Againe,

Mat. 6. 29.

Againe, it comforts us in all our wants what soever that God will take care for us : Christ useth this argument, God saith he, cloatheth the Lillies of the field with an excellent beauty, he cares even for the meanest plants, and will he not take care for you, *o ye of little faith ?* Doth he care for Lillies that are to day, and to morrow are cast into the oven, and shall he not care for the Lillies of Paradise, the living Lillies, those holy reasonable Lillies ? undoubtedly he will. Our Saviour Christ's reason is undeniable, he that puts such a beauty upon the poore plants that flourish to day in the morning and wither before night, he that puts such a beauty upon the grasse of the field, will he not put more excellency upon his children ? will he not provide for them, feed them ? undoubtedly he will. Thus we have shewed why Gods children in the Church of God are compared to Lillies.

To gather Lillies.

Christ is said to gather these Lillies, that is, he will gather them together, Christ will not have his Lillies alone scattered, though hee leaves them oft alone for a while, yet he will gather them to Congregations and Churches: the name of a Church in the Originall is *Ecclesia*, it is nothing but a company gathered out of the world. Doe we thinke that we are Lillies by nature ? no we are thornes and briars, God make us Lillies, and then gathers us to other Lillies, that one may strengthen another. The Spirit of God in his children is not a Spirit of separation of Christians

*That Christ's
Lillies shall not
bee scattered,
but he will ga-
ther them to-
gether.*

S E R . XVIII ans from Christians ; but a spirit of separation from the waſt wild wildernesſe of the world ; as we ſay of fire, *Congregat homogenea & diſgregat heterogenea*, it congregates all hemogenial things, as gold, which it gathers, but diſgregates heterogenial things, conſumeth droſſe : ſo the Spirit of God ſevers thornes and gathers Lillies, gathers Christianſ together in the Church, and will gather them for ever in Heaven.

*That the iſſue
of fruitfull con-
ference is great
at laſt, though
flat and dull at
beginning.*

Thus we ſee the anſwer of the Church to the *daughters of Ierusalem*, whiſt it was, with the occaſion thereof, the Question of the *daughters of Ierusalem*, whiſter is thy Beloved gone ? ſo that the Church was beholding to the *daughters of Ierusalem* for ministring ſuch a question to give her occaſion to know better what her Beloved was : Indeed we many times gaine by weaker Christians good questions, though from weake ones, minister ſuitable anſwers : It is a Greek Proverbe, that *doubting begets plenty and abundance*, for doubting at the firſt begets resolution at laſt. O that we could take occaſion hence, to thiſke of this, what excellent vertue is in the communion of Saints, when they meet about heavenly exer- cises, what a blessing followes, when though at the entry, their affections may be flat and dull, yet they part not ſo, Christ heates and inflames their hearts to doe much good to one another. O those that ſhall for ever live together in Heaven, ſhould they not delight to live more together on earth.

THE



The nineteenth Sermon.

CANT. VI. II.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.

These words are a kind of triumphant acclamation upon all the former passages, as it were the foot of the Song; for when the Church had spoken formerly of her ill dealing with Christ, and how he thereupon absented himself from her, with many other passages, she shuts up at last with this, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.*

Now she begins to feele some comfort from Christ, who had estranged himselfe from her, O (saith she) notwithstanding all my sufferings, desertions, crosses, and the like, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.* Words expressing the wondrous comfort, joy, and contentment, the Church now had in Christ, having her heart inflamed with love unto him, upon his manifesting of himselfe to her soule, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.*

There

SER.XIX.

There is a mutuall intercourse and vicissitude of claiming interest betwixt Christ and his Church, *I am Christ's, and Christ is mine; I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.*

From the dependance and order of the words, comming in after a desrtion for a while, observe,

Observe.

That Christ will not be long from his Church.

Why Christ
cannot be long
absent from his
Church.

The spirituall desrtions (forsakings as we use to call them) howsoever they be very irkesome to the Church (that loves communion with Christ) and to a loving soule, to be deprived of the sence of her beloved; yet notwithstanding they are but short, Christ will not be long from his Church, his love, and her desire will not let him, they offer violence: why art thou absent (say they) why art thou so farre off, and hidest thy selfe? *Joseph may conceale himselfe for a space, but he will have much adoe so to hold long, to be straigntened to his brethren, passion will breake out.* So Christ may seeme hard to be intreated, and to crosse his owne sweet disposition, as to the woman of *Canaan*, but he will not long keep at this distance, he is soone overcome, O woman great is thy Faith, have what thou wilst, when she strove with him a little (as Faith is a striving grace) see how she did win upon him. So the *Angell* and *Jacob* may strive for a while, but *Jacob* at the length proves *Israel*, he prevails with God. So it is with the Christian soule and Christ, howsoever there be desrtion (for causes before mentioned) because the Church was negligent

ligent (as we heare) and partly for the time to come, that Christ by his estrangement might sweeten his comming againe, howsoever there may be strangenesse for a time, yet Christ will returne againe to his Spouse.

The Use should be, not onely for comfort, to stay us in such times, but to teach us likewise to wait and never give over : If the Church had given over here, she had not had such gracious manifestations of Christ to her : learne hence therefore this use, to wait Gods leisure. God will wait to doe good to them that wait on him : If we wait his leisure, he will wait an opportunity of doing good to us : When God seemes not to answer our prayers, let us yet wait, we shall not lose by our tarrying, he will wait to doe us good.

In the next place observe after this temporary desertion, Christ visits his Church with more abundant comfort then ever before.

Now the Church cannot hold, *My Beloved is mine and I am his*, and Christ cannot hold, but falleth into a large commendation of his Spouse backe againe; as she was large in his commendations, so he is large in hers, and more large, he will have the last word; therefore learne by this experience, *that all things worke together for the best to them that love God*: all things. What evill? I evill; why even sin turnes to their humiliation, yea & desertion (those spirituall ills) turns to their good; for Christ seemes to forsake for a while that he may come after with more abundance of com-

SER.XIX.

Use. I.
Consolation to
support us in de-
sertion.

Isa. 30.18.

*That we lose
nothing by our
largenesse of af-
fection to Christ
for his returne
to ours is excep-
ding ours.*

Rom. 8.28.

SIR. XIX.

comfort, when once he hath enlarged the soule before with a spacious desire of his comming, to say, O that he would come, when the soule is thus stretched with desire in the fense of want, then he fils it againe till it burst forth, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his.* It was a good experiment of *Bernard*, an holy man in ill times, *tibi accidit*, &c. speaking of Christ dealing with his Church, he comes and he goeth away for thy good, he comes for thy good to comfort thee, after which if thou be not carefull to maintaine communion with him, then he goeth away for thy good to correct thy error, and to enlarge thy desire of him againe, to teach thee to lay sure and faster hold upon him, when thou hast him, not to let him goe againe.

That after seeing
of Christ in
all his meanes
we must wait
for him.

If you would see a paralel place to this, look in *Cant. 3.* where there is the like case of the Spouse and Christ, *By night on my bed I sought him*, the Church sought Christ not onely by day but by night, *I sought him whom my soule loved*, though she wanted him, yet her soul loved him constant. Though a Christians soule have not present communion with Christ, yet he may truly say, my soule loves him, because she seeks him diligently and constantly in the use of all the means: So we see the Church before my Text, calls him my beloved still, though she wanted communion with him, well she goes on, *I sought him, but I found him not*, would the Church give over there? no, then she riseth and goeth about the City, and about the streets, and seeks him whom her

This is the furest token of our
everent love to
Christ.

her soule loved, seeks him and will not give over. So I sought him (but I wanted the issue of my seeking) I found him not, what comes upon that, *The Watchmen goe about the City and find her*, of whom, when by her owne seeking she could not find Christ, she enquires, *Saw you him whom my soule loveth?* she enquires of the Watchmen, the guides of Gods people, who could not satisfie her fully, she could not find her beloved, yet what doth she? she shewes, Ver.4. It was but a little that she stayed; after she had used all means private and publike, *in her bed*, out of her bed, by the *Watchmen* and others; yet (saith she) it was but a little that I was past from them, she had not an answer presently, thought the Watchmen gave her some good counsell, it was not presently, yet not long after. Christ will exercise us a while with waiting, *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soule loved.* After all our seeking there must be waiting, and then we shall find him whom our soule loveth: perhaps we have used all meanes private and publike, and yet find not that comfort we looke for, O but wait a while, God hath a long time waited for thee, be thou content to wait a while for him, we shall not lose by it; for it followes in the next verse, after she had found him whom her soule loved, *I held him, I would not let him gae.* So this is the issue of desertions, they stirre up diligence and searching in the use of meanes private and publike, and exercise patience to wait Gods pleasure, who will not suffer a gracious soule

If God wait
long for us, it is
equity to wait
for him.

S.B.R. XIX.
Psal. 145.

soule to faile of its expectation, at length he will fulfill the desires of them that feare him, and this comes of their patience, grace growes greater and stronger, *I held him and would not let him goe untill I had brought him unto my mothers house.*

Thus you see how the Spirit expresseth the same truth in another state of the Church. Compare place with place. To goe on,

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.

The words themselves are a passionate expression of long lookt for consolation. Affections have eloquence of their owne beyond words; feare hath a proper expression, love vents it selfe in broken words, and sighes, delighting in a peculiar eloquence suitable to the height and pitch of the affection, that no words can reach unto, so that here is more in the words breathed from such an inflamed heart then in ordinary construction can be pickt out (*I am my Beloveds, &c.*) comming from a full and large heart, expressing the union and communion between Christ and the Church (especially after a desertion) *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.*

That there
must be union
of persons be-
fore union and
communion of
graces with
Christ.

First (I say) the union, viz. the union of persons which is before all comfort and communion of graces, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, Christs person is ours, and our persons are his; for as it is in marriage, if the person of the husband be not the wives, his goods are not hers, nor his titles of honour; for these come all to her, because his person is hers, he having passed over the right of his owne body, and of his person

son to his wife, as she hath passed over all the right of her selfe to her husband : so it is in this mysticall marriage, that that intitles us to communion of graces is union of persons between Christ and his Church, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved himselfe is mine;* And indeed nothing else will content a Christians heart, he would not care so much for Heaven it selfe, if he had not Christ there : the Sacrament, Word, and Comforts, why doth he esteeme them ? as they come from Christ, and as they lead to Christ ; it is but an adulterous and base affection to love any thing severed from Christ.

Now from this union of persons comes a communion of all other things whatsoever, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine :* If Christ himselfe be mine, then all is mine, what he hath done, what he hath suffered is mine, the benefit of all is mine, what he hath is mine, his prerogatives and priviledges to be the Son of God, and heire of Heaven, and the like, all is mine. Why ? himselfe is mine, union is the foundation of communion. So it is here with the Church, *I am my Beloveds,* my person is his, my life is his, to glorifie him, and to lay it downe when he will, my goods are his, my reputation his, I am content to sacrifice all for him, I am his, all mine is his : so you see there is union and communion mutually between Christ and his Church. The Originall and spring hereof is Christs uniting and communicating himselfe to his Church first, the spring begins to the streme, what hath the

That from union of persons comes communion of all other things whatsoever.

SAR. XIX.

1 Joh. 4.19.

streame or cisterne in it, but what is had from the spring; first we love him, because he loved us first. It was a true speech of *Augustine*, *Quicquid bonum, &c.* Whatsoever is good in the world or lovely, it is either God or from God; it is either Christ or from Christ, he begins it: It is said in nature, love descends, the father and the mother love the childe before the childe can love them, love indeed is of a fiery nature, onely here is the dissimilitude, fire ascends, love descends, it is stronger descending from the greater to the lesse, then ascending up from the meaner to the greater, and that for this,

Why the magnanimity of the greater stoops in love to the lesser.

D:ut 30.

1 Thes. 4.9.

That in the new Covenant God works both parts.

Amongst other reasons, Because the greater person looks upon the lesser as a peice of himself, seeth himself in it, the father and mother see themselves in their childe: so God loves us more then we can love him, because he sees his Image in us; neither is there onely a priority of order, he loves us first, and then we love him; but also of causality, he is the cause of our love, not by way of motive onely he loves us, and therefore from an ingenious spirit we must love him againe; but he gives us his Spirit, circumciseth our hearts to love him; for all the motives or morall perswasions in the world without the Spirit cannot make us love, we are taught of God to leve one another, our brethren whom we see daily (saith *Paul*) much more need wee be taught to love him whom we never saw, so that his love kindles ours by way of reflection.

In the New Covenant, God works both parts, his

his owne and our parts too, our love to him, our feare of him, our faith in him, he works all, even as he shewes his owne love to us.

If God love us thus, what must we doe ? meditate upon his love, let our hearts be warmed with the consideration of it, let us bring them to that fire of his love, and then they will waxe hot within us, and beg the Spirit, Lord thou hast promised to give thy Spirit to them that aske it, and to circumcise our hearts to love thee, and to love one another, give thy holy Spirit as thou hast promised.

In a word, these words, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, to joyne them both together, they imply a mutuall propriety, Christ hath a propriety in me, and I in Christ, peculiar propriety, Christ is mine, so as I have none in the world so mine ; whom have I in Heaven but Christ ? and what is there in earth in comparison of him ? he is mine, and mine in a peculiar manner, and I am his in a peculiar manner, there is propriety with peculiarity.

Then againe these words I am his, implies mutuall love, all is mutuall in them, mutuall propriety, mutuall peculiarity, and mutuall love, I love Christ so as I love nothing else, there is nothing above him in my heart, as Christ loves me more then any thing else (saith the Church) and every Christian he loves all, and gives outward benefits to all, but to me hath given himselfe, so love I him. As the husband loves all in the family, his cattell and his servants, but he

*How to have
our hearts war-
med with the
love of God.
Psal. 39.*

Luk. 11.

*That this con-
fidence of the
church implies.*

1.
Propriety.

2.
Love.

SER.XIX.

gives himselfe to his Spouse. So Christ is mine, himselte is mine, and my selfe am Christs, he hath my soule, my affections, my body, and all, he hath a propriety in me, and a peculiarity in me, he hath my affection and love to the uttermost, as I have his, for there is an entercourse in these words.

3.
Familiarity.

Then againe, they imply mutuall familiarity, Christ is familiar to my soule and I to Christ, he discovers himselfe to me in the secret of his love, and I discover my selfe to him in prayer and meditation, opening my soule to him upon all occasions. Gods children have a spirit of prayer, which is a spirit of fellowship, and talkes (as it were) to God in Christ ; It is the language of a new borne Christian, he cries to his Father, there is a kind of familiarity between him and his God in Christ, who gives the entrance and accesseto God, so that where there is not a kind of familiarity in prayer and opening of the soule to Christ upon all occasions, there is not this holy communion. Those that are not given to prayer, they cannot in truth speake these words, as the Church doth here, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, for they imply sweet familiarity.

4.
Mutuall likenesse

Then againe they imply mutuall likenesse one to another, he is mine and I am his, the one is a glasse to the other, Christ sees himselfe in me, I see my selfe in him, for this is the issue of spirituall love, especially that it breeds likenesse and resemblance of the party loved in the soule that

SER.XIX.

*That love frameth the soule
to the likenesse
of the party
loved.*

that loveth ; for loue frameth the soule to the likenesse of the party loved, I am his, I resemble him, I am his, I have given my selfe to him, I carry his picture and resimblance in my soule; for they are words of mutuall conformity. Christ out of love became like me in all things, wherein I am not like the Devill (that is siane excepted) if he became like me, taking my nature that I might be neare him in the fellowship of grace, *My Beloved is mine*, I wil be as like him as possible I can, I am his, every Christian carrieth a character of Christs disposition as farre as weaknesse will suffer, you may know Christ in every Christian ; for as the Kings coyne carries the stamp of the King, *Cesars coyne* beares *Cesars superscription*. So every Christian soule is Gods coyne, and hee sets his owne stamp upon it; if we be Christs , there is a mutuall conformitie betwixt him and us.

Now where you see a malicious, uncleane, worldly spirit, know that is a stamp of the devill, none of Christs, he that hath not the Spirit of God is none of his, now where the Spirit of Christ is, it stamps Christs likenesse upon the soule; therefore we are exhorted, *Phil. 2.5.* to be like minded to Christ.

Againe, these words, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, imply a mutuall care that Christ and the soul have one of the good of another, of each others honour and reputation , as Christ hath a care of our good : so a Christian soule(if it can say with truth and sincerity I am Christs)

*Mutuall care of
one anothers
good.*

SER. XIX.
What Christ
hath to care for
in the world.

it must needs have care of Christ's good, of his children, Religion, and Truth. What? will such a soule say, shall Christ care for my body, soule and salvation, and stoop to come from Heaven to save me, and shall I have no care for him and his glory? he hath left his truth and his Church behind him, and shall not I defend his truth and stand for the poore Church to the utmost of my power against all contrary power? shall not I stand for Religion? shall it be all one to me, what opinions are held? shall I pretend he cares for me, and shall not I care for that I should care for? Is it not an honour to me that he hath trusted mee to care for any thing that he will be honoured by my care, Beloved it is an honour for us that we may speake a good word for Religion, for Christ's cause, for his Church against maligners and opposers, and we shall know one day that Christ will be a rewarder of every good word: where this is said in sincerity, that Christ is mine and I am Christ's, there will be this mutuall care.

*A mutuall com-
placency or re-
sting love.*

Likewise there is implied a mutuall complacency in these words; by a complacency, I meane a resting, contenting love, Christ hath a complacency and resting in the Church, and the Church hath a sweet resting contentment in Christ; Christ in us and we in him. A true Christian soul that hath yeelded up its consent to Christ, when it is barren in the world, vexed and turmoiled, it can rely on this, I have yet a loving husband, yet I have Christ.

Let

Let this put us upon a search into our selves, what we retire too when we meet with afflictions; those that have brutish and beastly soules retire to carnall contentments, to good fellowship, forget, besot, and fly away from themselves, their owne consciences, and thought of their owne trouble, whereas a soule that hath any acquaintance with God in Christ, or any interest into Christ, so that it may say, that Christ is mine and I am Christs, there will be contentment and rest in such a soule, whatsoever it meets with in the world.

S E R . X I X .
*What we should
retire to and do
in afflictions.*

The last thing implied is courage, a branch of the former; say all against it what they can, saith the resolved soule, I will be Christs, here is courage with resolution; agreeable hereto is that, *Isa.44.5.* One shall say I am the Lords, and another shall call himselfe by the name of *Jacob*, another shall subscribe and surname himselfe by the name of *Israel*. Where there is not this resolution in good causes, there is not the Spirit of Christ, there is no interest unto Christ, it is but a delusion and selfe-flattery to say I am Christs, when there is not resolution to stand to Christ: these words are the expression of a resolved heart, I am, and I will be Christs, I am not ashamed of my bargaine, of the consent I have given him, I am and I will be his. You have the like in *Micah 4.5.* All people will walke every one in the name of his god, they will resolve on that, and we will walke in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever: so that

7.
*Is courage in
owning Christs
cause with reso-
lution, for the
Church is re-
solute.*

Micah 4.5.

SAR. XIX.

where these wodts are spoken in truth, that I am Christ, there is necessarily implied, I will owne him, and his cause for ever and ever.

He hath married me for ever and ever, therefore if I hope to have interest in him for comfort for ever and ever, I must be sure to yeeld my selfe to him for ever and ever, and stand for his cause in all oppositions against all enemies whatsoever. These and such like places in Scripture run paralell with this in the text, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*, not onely holding in the person, but in the cause of Christ. Every man hopes his God will stand for him against the Devill who accuseth us daily : If we will have Christ to stand for us, and to be an Advocate to plead our cause (as he doth) in Heaven, we must resolve to stand for him against all enemies, heretickes, schismatickes, persecutors whatsoever, that we will walke in the name of our God, for ever and ever.

Quest

But when the case is not thus with us, and that neither we can feele comfort from Christ, nor have this assurance of his love to us, what should we judge of such ?

Sol.
That we should
not wonder to
see distemper
in desertion.

We should not wonder to see poore soules distempered when they are in spirituall desertions, considering how the Spouse cannot endure the absence of Christ, it is out of love, therfore in the deepest plunge she hath this in her mouth, *my Beloved*. Therefore let us not judge amisse of our selves or others, when we are impatient in this kind.

But

But for a more full answer, in want of feeling of the love of Christ in regard of that measure we would (for there is never altogether a want of feeling) there is so much as keeps from despaire alway; yet if we carry a constant love towards him, mourne to him and seeke after him, as the Church here: If the desire of our soules be after him, that we make after him in the use of meanes, and are willing to speake of him, as the Church here, feele or feele not wee are his, and hee will at length discover himselfe to us.

Let such drooping spirits consider, that as he will not be long from us, nor wholly: so it shall not be for our disadvantage that he retires at all, his absence at length will end in a sweet discovery of himselfe more abundantly then before, he absents himselfe for our good, to make us more humble and watchfull for the time to come, more pittifull to others, more to prize our former condition, to justifie the wayes of God more strictly, to walke with him, to regaine that sweet communion which by our negligence and security we lost, when we are thus prepared by his absence, there ensues a more satisfying discovery of himselfe then ever before.

But when is the time that he comes? Compare this with the former Chapter, he comes after long waiting for him, the Church waited for him, and waited in the use of all meanes, she runs to the Watchmen, and then enquires after him of the daughters of Ierusalem, after this she finds him.

*Causes why
God absents
himselfe from
his children.*

*When usually
Christ returnes
after desertion
to the soule.*

SER.XIX.

him. After we have waited and expected Christ in the use of meanes, Christ at length will discover himselfe to us. And yet more immediately it was after the Church had so deservedly exalted him in such lofty praises, *This is my Beloved, the chiefe of ten thousand, he is altogether lovely*: When we set our hearts to the high exaltation of Christ above all things in the world, proclaiming him *the chiefe of ten thousand*, this at the last breeds a gracious discovery, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*; for Christ when he sees us faithfull, and so loving, that we will not endure his absence, and so constantly loving, that we love him notwithstanding some discouragements, it melts him at the last, as Joseph was melted by his brethren.

I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine.

*That in order
of nature Christ
is ours first,
though not in order
of knowing it
to be so.*

In the words you see a mutuall interest and owning between Christ and the Church, howsoever in the order of words, the Church saith, *I am my Beloveds first*; yet in order of nature Christ is ours first, though not in order of discovery, there is one order of knowing, and another order of causing, many things are knowne by the effect, but they issue from a cause; I know he is mine, because I am his, I have given my selfe to him, I know it is day, because the Sunne is up, there is a prooef from the effect: so I know a man is alive, because he walks, there is a prooef of the cause by the effect, I am his, I have grace to give my selfe up to him; therefore I know he loves me, he is mine, thus I say in order of discovery,

but

but in order of nature, he is first mine, and th
I am his, *My Beloved is mine and I am my Belo-
veds.*

The Union and Communion betwixt us and
Christ hath been already spoken of.

Now to speake of the branches, *I am my Belo-
veds and my Beloved is mine.* That Christ is first
ours, and then we are his because he is ours, and
the wondrous comfort that issues hence, that
Christ himselfe is ours.

How comes Christ to be ours, Christ is ours by
his Fathers gift, God hath given him for us.
Christ is ours by his owne gift, he hath given
himselfe for us.

And Christ is ours by his Spirit that witnes-
seth so much to our spirits; for the Spirit is given
for this purpose, to shew us all things that are gi-
ven us of God, whereof Christ is the chiefe;
therefore the Spirit of Christ tel us that Christ
is ours, and Christ being ours, all that he hath is
ours.

If he be ours, if we have the field, we have all
the treasures in the field: if we have him, we have
all his, he was borne for us, his birth was for us,
he became man for us, he was given to death for
us, and so likewise he is ours in his other estate of
exaltation, his rising is for our good, he will cause
us to rise also, and ascend with him, and sit in
heavenly places, judging the world, and the An-
gels. We recover in this second what we lost in
the first *Adam.*

This is a point of wondrous comfort, to shew
the

*How Christ
comes to be ours*

• 1.
*By his own and
his Fathers gift*

2.
By his Spirit.

*Vse. I.
Consolation.*

SER.XIX. the riches of a Christian, his high estate, that Christ is his.

2 Cor. 1.10.

And Christ being ours, God the Father and the Holy Spirit, and all things else in the world, the rich promises are ours; for in Christ they are all made, and for him they shall be performed, for indeed he is the chiefe promise of all himselfe, and all are yea and Amen in him. Can we want Righteousnesse, while wee have Christs Righteousnesse? is not his garment large enough for himselfe and vs too? is not his obedience enough for us? shall we need to patch it up with our owne righteousness? he is ours, therefore his obedience is ours.

*Use 2.
Contentation.*

And this shall be a ground likewise of contention in our condition and state whatsoever, Christ himselfe is ours. In the dividing of all things some men have wealth, honours, friends, and greatnessse, but not Christ, nor the love of God in Christ, and therefore they have nothing in mercy; but a Christian he hath Christ himselfe, Christ is his by faith and by the Spirits witnessse; therefore what if he want those appendencies, the lesser things, he hath the maine, what if he want a riveret, a streame, he hath the spring, the ocean, him in whom all things are, and shal he not be content? Put case a man be very covetous, yet God might satisfie him. What should anxious thoughts disquiet us? when we have such bils, such obligations from him who is faithfulnessse it selfe, when a Christian cannot say, honour, favour, or great persons are his; yet he

he can say, he hath that that is worth all, more then all, Christ is his.

O may some say, this is but a speculation Christ is yours, a man may want and be in misery for al that? No it is a reality, Christ is ours, and all things else are ours, he that can command all things is mine, why then doe I want other things? because he sees they are not for my good, if they were he would not withhold them from me, if there were none to be had without a miracle, no comfort, no friends, he could and would make new out of nothing, nay out of contraries, were it not better for me to be without them.

That you may the more fully feed on this comfort, study the excellencies of Christ in the Scripture, the riches and honour that he hath, the favour he is in with his Father, with the intercession that he makes in Heaven, study his mercy, goodness, offices, power, &c. and then come home to your selves, all this is mine, for he is mine, the love of God is mine, God loves him, and therefore he loves me, because we are both one, he loves me with the same love that he loves his Sonne. Thus we should make use of this, that Christ is ours. I come to the second.

I am my Beloveds.

This is a speech of reflection, second in nature, though first in place and in discovery to us. Sometimes we can know our owne love, when we feele not so much the love of Christ, but Christ's

SER.XIX.

*Obiect.**Answ.*

*Why sometimes
we want out-
ward things be-
ing in Christ.*

*Use 3.
Exhortation to
study the excel-
lency of Christ.
Ioh.17.ult.*

SER.XIX. Christ's love must be there first, *I am my Beloveds.*

*How we come
to be and are in
Christ beloved.*

1.
*By his Fathers
gift.*

How are we Christ's Beloved? we are his, first of all by his Father's gift; for God in his eternall purpose gave him for us, and gives us to him, as it is in the excellent prayer, *John 17*. Father thine they were and thou gavest them me. I had not them of my selfe first, but thine they were before all worlds were, thou gavest them me to redeeme them, and my Commission doth not extend beyond thy gift; I die for all those that thou gavest me, I sanctifie my selfe for them that they may be sanctified: so we are Christ's in his Father's gift; but that is not all, though it be the chiefe fundamentall principall ground of all.

2.
By Redemption

Exod. 4:25.

For we are his likewise by Redemption, Christ tooke our nature, that he might die for us to purchase us. We cost him deare, we are a bloudy Spouse to Christ, as that froward woman wrongfully said to *Moses*, thou art a bloudy husband unto me: so Christ may without wrong say to the Church, thou art a Spouse of bloud to me. We were indeed to be his Spouse; but first he must win us by conquest in regard of Satan, and then satisfie justice, we were in such debt by sin, lying under Gods wrath, so as till all debts were paid, we could not in the way of justice be given as a Spouse to Christ.

3.
By Marriage.

Nor is this all, but we are Christ's by Marriage also, for when he purchased us, and paid so deare for us; when he died and satisfied divine

vine justice, he did it with a purpose to marry us to himselfe, we have nothing to bring him but debt and misery , yet he tooke upon him our nature to discharge all, that he might marry us, and take us to himselfe, so we are his by Marriage.

Then againe we are his by Consent, we have passed our selves over unto him, he hath given himselfe to us, and we have given our selves to him backe againe. To come to some Use of it, if we be Christ's as Christ is ours.

First it is a point of wondrous comfort, God will not suffer his owne to want, he is worse then an Infidell that will suffer his Family to perish ; when we are once of Christ's Family, and not only of his Family, but of his body, his Spouse, can we thinke he will suffer us to want that which is needfull ?

Then againe, as it comforts us against want, so it likewise fenceth us against all the accusations of Satan, I am Christ's, I am Christ's, if he have anything to say, loe we may bid him goe to Christ: If the Creditor comes to the wife, she is not lyable to pay her owne debts, but faith, goe to my husband : so in all temptations learne hence, to send Satan whether hee should be sent, when we cannot answer him, send him to Christ.

And for the time to come, what a ground of comfort is this, that we are Christ's as well as he is ours ; what a plea doth this put into our mouths for all things that are beneficiale to us,

Lord

4.
By Consent.

Use. i.
*Consolation a-
gainst wants.*

2.
*Against all Sa-
tan's accusa-
tions.*

3.
*For the time to
come.*

SER.XIX.

Isa. 62.3.

Lord I am thine, save me (saith the Psalmist) why? save me, because I am thine, I am thine, Lord teach me and direct me. The husband is to direct the Spouse, the head should direct all the senses: All the treasures of wisdom are in Christ, as all the senses are in the head for the good of the body, all fulnesse dwels in him; therefore please with him, I want wisdom, teach me and instruct me how to behave my selfe in troubles, in dangers, in feares: If it be an argument strong enough amongst men (weake men) I am thine, I am thy childe, I am thy Spouse, &c. Shall we attribute more pitty and mercy to our selves then to the God of mercy and comfort, who planted these affections in the creature? Shall he make men tender and carefull over others, and shall not he himselfe be carefull of his owne flocke? doe we thinkethat he will neglect his jewels, his Spouse, his Diadem and Crowne? he will not?

But you will urge experience, we see how the Church is used even as a forlorne widdow, as if she had no husband in the world; as an Orphan that hath no Father, therefore how doth this stand good?

The answer is, all that the Church or any particular Christian suffers in this world, it is but that there may be a conformity between the Spouse and the Husband. The Head wore a crowne of thornes, and went to Heaven and happiness, through a great deale of misery and abasement in the world, the lowest that ever was: And

*Answ. I
That the sufferings both of the Church and particular persons in especially for conformity with Christ the head.*

it is not meet that the Church should go to Heaven another way.

Then againe, all this is but to fashion the Spouse to be like to Christ, but to bring the Church and Christ nearer together, that is all the hurt they doe, to drive the Church nearer to Christ then before, Christ is as neare to his Church as ever in the greatest afflictions by his Spirit, Christ cryes out on the crosse, *My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?* It is a strange voice, that God should be his God, and yet notwithstanding seeme to forsake him. But God was never more his God then at that present; indeed he was not his God in regard of some feelings that he had enjoyed in former times, he seemed to be forsaken in regard of some fense, as Christ seemes to forsake the Church in regard of some fense and feeling, but yet his God still. So the Church may say, I am thine still, though she seeme to be forsaken in regard of some feelings, yet she is not deserted in regard of Gods care for support of the inward man and fashioning to Christ. The Church hath never sweeter communion with Christ, then under the greatest crosses; and therefore they many times have proved the ground of the greatest comforts; for Christ leads the Church into the wildernesse, and then speaks to her heart, *Hosea 2.14.* Christ speaks to the heart of his Spouse in the wildernesse, that is, in a place of no comfort, there are no Orchards or pleasures, but all discomforts, there a man must have it from Heaven if he

^{2.}
To fashion her
to be like Christ

That though
Christ seem ab-
sent in afflic-
tion, yet he is ne-
ver more gra-
ciously nearer
then then.

That the sweet-
est Communion
with Christ is
under the grea-
test crosses.

have any good in the wildernesse. In that wildernesse that is in a desolate disconsolate estate; Christ speaks to the heart of his children, there is in the wildernesse oftentimes a sweet intercourse of love incomparably beyond the time of prosperity.

Again, to stay your hearts, know this will not be long, as we see here the Church seemed to be forsaken and neglected, fell into the hands of cruell Watchmen, and was faine to goe through this and that meanes, but it was not long ere she met with him whom she sought after. It may be midnight at this time, but the night continues not long, it will be morning ere long; therefore the Church may well say, *Rejoyce not against me, o mine enemy*, as it is Micah 7. For though I be fallen, I shall rise againe, though I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light unto me. It shall not be alway ill with the Church, those that survive us shall see other manner of dayes then we see yet (whatsoever we shall our selves) Hence we have also an Use of Tryall, Whosoever are Christs, they have hearts to give themselves to him, as he gives himselfe, not his goods or his honours, but himselfe for his Church. So the Church gives her self to Christ, my delight is in him, he hath my selfe, my heart, my love and affection, my joy and delight, and all with my self, if I have any honour, he shall have it, I will use it for his glory, my riches I will give them to him and his Church, and Ministry and Children (as occasion shall serve) I am his, therefore

Micah 7.8.

*Tryall if or not
wee be Christs
by giving our
selves over to
him to be ruled
by him.*

fore all that I have is his if he ask it at my hands. It is said of the *Macedonians*, they gave themselves to Christ, and then their riches and goods; it is an easie matter to give our riches to Christ, when we have given our selves first. A Christian as soone as ever he becomes a Christian, and ever after to death and in death too, he gives up himselfe to Christ; they that stand with Christ, and will give this or that particular, will part only with idle things that they may spare, are they Christs? No, a Christian gives himselfe, and all his to Christ: so we see here what we should doe if Christ be ours, let us give up our selves to him, as it is *Rom. 12.* the issue of all that learned profound discourse in the former part of the Epistle, that Christ justifieth us by his righteousness and merit, and sanctifieth us by his Spirit, and hath predestinated and elected us and refused others, is this, *I beseech you give up your soules and bodies, and all as aliving sacrifice holy and acceptable unto God.*

In briefe these words imply renunciation and resignation, *I am his*, that is, I have given up my selfe to him, therefore I renounce all others that stand not with his love and liking. I am not only his by way of service, which I owe him above all that call for it; but I am his by way of resignation, if he will have me dye, I will dye, if he will have me live here, I will, I have not my selfe to dispose of any longer, I have altogether alienated my selfe from my selfe, I am his to serve him, his to be disposed of by him, I have renounced all other.

SER. XIX.

That after we have given ourselves to Christ it is an easie matter to part with all things unto him.
2 Cor. 8. 5.

*That the
churches confi-
dence implies
renunciation,
and resignation
in a deep
sense.*

SER. XIX.

*Ans w.**An answer to
Satan agaist
despaire or sin
in temptation.*

1 Cor. 6.15.

*That it is our
exceeding hap-
pines that now
we are not our
owne.*

Therefore here we have another answer to Satan, If he comes to us and solicite us to saine, let the Christians heart make this answer, I am not mine owne, what hath Satan and his instruments to doe with me? is my body his to defile? is my tongue his to sweare at his pleasure? shall I make the Temple of God the member of an harlot? (as the Apostle reasons) shall I defile my vessel with siane? What saith converted Ephraim, *Hocca 14 8. What have I any more to doe with Ido's, for I have seen and observed him?* We ought to have such resolutions ready in our hearts: indeed when a Christian is resolute, the world counts such to be lost, he is gone, we have lost him, say your dissolute prophane persons. It is true they have lost him indeed, for he is not his owne, much lesse theirs any longer, but he is found to God, and himselfe, and the Church. Thus wee see what springs from this, that Christ is ours, and that we are Christs backe again. Let vs carry this with us even to death, and if times should come that God should honour us by seruing himselfe of us in our lives, if Christ will have us spend our bloud, consider this, I am not mine owne in life nor death, and it is my happiness that I am not mine owne; for if I were mine owne, what should I doe with my selfe? I should lose my selfe as *Adam* did. It is therefore my happiness that I am not mine owne, that I am not the worlds, that I am not the Devils, that none else hath to doe with me, to claime any interest in me, but I am Christs, if I doe any thing

for

for others, it is for Christ's sake. Remember this for the time to come, if there be any thing that we will not part with for Christ's sake, it will be our bane, we shall lose Christ and it too. If we will not say with a perfect spirit I am his, my life, my credit, my person is his, any thing his, looke what we will not give for him, at length we shall lose and part with it and him too.



The twentieth Sermon.

CANT. VI. II.

I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine, he feedeth among the Lillies.

 He Church you see here, though shee stood out a while against all Christ's invitation and knocking, yet at length shee is brought to yeeld her selfe up wholly unto Christ, and to renounce her selfe, which course God takes with most, yea in a manner with all his people ere they goe out of this world, to lay all high things low, to beat downe every high thought and imagination which exalteth it selfe

SER. XIX.

2 Cor. 10.

Luk. 14. 26.

against him, that they may give themselves and all they have to Christ, if he call for it, for he that doth not so is not worthy of Christ, if we do not this at least in preparation of mind, let us not owne the name of Christians, lest we owne that which shall further increase and aggravate our condemnation, professing Religion one way, and yet alienating our minds to our lusts and pleasures of the world another way, to have peculiar love fits of our owne distinct from Christ, how stands this with, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, how stands it with the selfe resignation that was spoken of before.

*Reasons of selfe
resignation to
Christ, being
persuaded that
he is ours.*

Now this followes upon apprehension of Christ being ours, *I am my Beloveds, because my Beloved is mine first*. There are fourre reasons why Christ must be given to us, before we can give our selves to him by this selfe resignation.

1. Because he is the chiefe spring of all good affections, which he must plant in us, loving us, ere we can love him, I Job 4. 10, 19.

2. Because love descends, though it be of a fiery nature, yet in this it is contrary, for love descends, whereas fire ascends, the superiorit first loves the inferiour, Christ must descend in his love to us, ere we can ascend to him in our affections.

3. Because our nature is such that we cannot love but where wee know our selves to be loved first; therefore God is indulgent to us herein, and that we may love him he manifests his love first to us.

4. Because naturally our selves being conscious of guilt are full of feares from thence: so that if the soule be not perswaded first of Christ's love, it runs away from him, as Adam did from God, and as Peter from Christ, Depart from me for I am but a sinfull man. So the soule of every man would say if first it were not perswaded of Gods love in Christ, who amongst us shall dwell with the everlasting burning; therefore to prevent that disposition of soule, which would rise out of the fence of guilt and unworthiness, God first speakes to us in Christ; at length saying unto our soules, *I am thy salvation*, whereupon the soule first finding his love, loves him backe againe of whom it finds it selfe so much beloved, so that our love is but a reflection of his, *I am my Beloveds, because my Beloved is mine.*

Is.33.

It is with the Spirit of God, as with the spirits in the soule and body of a man, there is a marriage betwixt the body and soule, the spirits joyne both together, being of a middle nature, for they have somewhat spirituall near the soule, and somewhat bodily neare the body; therefore they come between the body and the soule, and are the instruments thereof, whereby it works. So it is with the Spirit of God, the same Spirit that tels the soule that Christ is ours, the same Spirit makes up the match on our part, and gives us up to Christ againe.

Let this then be the tryall, that wee are Christys by the spirituall Ecchoe that our soules makes to that report which Christ makes to

SER. XX.

our soules, whether in promises or in instructions.

*Use I.
of Instruction.*

*That saith hath
a loue w^re
as to receive
Christ, so to
give us backe a-
gaines Christ.*

See hence likewise the nature of Faith ; for these are the words of Faith, as well as of love. Faith hath two branches, it doth give as well as take : Faith receives Christ, and sayes, Christ is mine, and the same Faith saith, I am Christs againe. Indeed our soules are empty, so that the maine woike of Faith is to bee an empty hand, *A mendica manus* (as Luther calls it) a beggers hand to receive ; but when it hath received, it gives backe againe, both our selves and all that we can doe; as 2 Cor. 8.5. The Churches of Macedonia gave themselves, and then they gave their goods. Where Faith is, there will be a giving of our selves and our goods, and (by a proportion) our strength, wits and all backe againe. This discovers a great deale of empty false Faith in the world ; for undoubtedly if it were true Faith, there would be a yeelding backe againe.

*That the
Churches con-
fidence shewes a
mutuall con-
sideration of ju-
stification and
sanctification.*

And againe, these words discover the mutuall coherence of *Justification* and *Sanctification*, and the dependance one upon another, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, Christ is mine, his righteousness is mine for my justification, I am cloathed with Christ, as it is, Rev. 12. *The Spouse* there is cloathed with the Sunne, with the beames of Christ; but is that all ? No. *I am my Beloveds, I am Christs, there is a returne of Faith in Sanctifi-
cation*, the same Spirit that witnesseth Christ is ours, it sanctifies and alters our disposition, that

we

we can say, I am Christs. It serues to instruct us therefore in the necessary connexion of these two, *Instification* and *Sanctification*, against the idle slander of *Papists*, that sinfully traduce that Doctrine, as if we were Solifideans, as if we severed *Instification* from *Sanctification*. No, we hold here that whensoever Christ is ours, there is a Spirit of *Sanctification* in us, to yeeld all to Christ, though this resignation be not presently perfect.

This likewise helps us (by way of Direction) to understand the Covenant of Grace, and the Seales of the Covenant, what they inforce and comprise, not only what God will doe to us, but the duty we are to doe to him againe, though we doe it in his strength. A Covenant holds not on one side, but on both, *Christ is mine, and I am Christs* againe, *I will be their God*, but they must have grace to be my people, and then the Covenant is made up. The Covenant of Grace is so called, because God is so gracious as to inable us to performe our owne part.

And so in the Seales of the Covenant, in Baptisme, God doth not only bind himselfe to doe thus and thus to us, but binds us also to doe backe againe to him. So in the Communion we promise to lead a new life, renewing our Covenant; and therefore we must not thinke that all is well, when we have received our maker, though we continue in a scandalous, fruitlesse course of life. No there is a promise in the Sacrament, the Seale of the Covenant of grace, to yeeld up our selves

Use 3.
A direction how
to understand
the Covenant of
Grace.

*Instanced in
the Seales of
the Covenant.*

SER. XIX.

selves to God, to returne to Christ againe with our duty, then we come as we should doe, when we come thus disposed. This for direction, *My Beloved is mine, and I am my Beloveds.*

Use.4.

*For comfort to
the weaker
Christians, and
to the whole
Church.*

To proceed, to make an Use of Comfort to poore doubting Christians, *I am my Beloveds*, is the voice of the whole Church, that all ranks of Christians (if they be true) may without presumption take up. I have not so much Faith, so much love, so much grace, so much patience, as another (saith a poore Christian) therefore I am none of Christs; but we must know that Christ hath in his Church of all ranks, and they are all his Spouse, one as well as another, there is no exception, there is a little spirit of emulation, and a spice of envy in Christians that are weaker, if they have not all that great measure of grace which they see in others, they feare they have none at all, as if there were no Babes in Christs schoole, as well as men, and growne persons.

*That the nature
of Faith is the
same in the
whole Church
as in every par-
ticular member.*

Gal. 2.

Then againe, we see here the nature of Faith in the whole Church, it is the same that is in every particular, and the same in every particular, as it is in the whole Church. The whole Church faith, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, I appropriate him, there is a spirit of appropriation in the whole, and there is so in each particular. Every Christian may say with Paul, *I live by Faith in the Sonne of God, that hath loved me and gave himselfe for me, and with Thomas, my God and my Lord.*

The ground hereof is, because they are all one in

in Christ, and there is one and the same Spirit in the whole Church and every particular Christian: As in pipes, though of different sounds, yet there is the same breath in them. So Christians may have different sounds from the greater or lesser strength of grace that is in the one and in the other, but all comes from the same breath, the same Spirit. The Spirit in the Bride saith come, the whole Church saith it, and every particular Christian must say it; because as the body is acted by one Spirit, and makes but one naturall body, though consisting of many parts weaker and stronger. So should there be a harmony in this mysticall body acted by that one Spirit of Christ, who so regards all, as if there were but one, and regards every one so, as he doth not forget the whole, *Sic omnibus attentus ut non detenus*, &c. Christ so attends to all, that he is not detained from any particular, and he so attends every particular that he is not restrained from all, there is the same love to all as to one, and to every one, as if there were no other, he so loves each one, that every Christian may say as well as the whole Church, Christ is mine, and I am Christs.

In those things that we call *Homogeniall*, there is the same nature in each quantity as in the whole: As there is the same nature in one drop of water as in the whole Ocean, all is water, and the same respect of a sparke, and of all the element of fire: so Christ beares the same respect to the Church as to every particular, and to eve
ry

SER.XX.

Use 3.

How to have direction to be able to say with the Church, I am my Beloveds, &c.

I.

We must dwell in the consideration of Christ's love to us.

Ioh. 13.1.

Gal. 4.7.
Phil. 3.12.

ry particular as to the Church.

To come to make an Use of Direction, how to come to be able to say this, *I am my Beloveds and my Beloved is mine*. For answer hereto take notice in the first place from the dependance, Christ must be first ours before we can give our selves to him, therefore we must dwell in the consideration of Christ's love, this must direct and leade our method in this thing. Would we have our hearts to love Christ, to trust in him, and to embrace him, why then thinke what is he to us? begin there, nay and what we are? weake, and in our apprehension lost, then goe to consider his love, his constant loue to his Church and children, whom he loves he loves to the end. We must warne our soules with the consideration of the love of God in him to us, and this will stirre up our Faith to him backe againe: *For we are more safe in that he is ours, then that we give our selves to him: we are more safe in his comprehending of us, then in our clasping and holding of him:* As we say of the mother and the childe both hold, but the safety of the childe is that the mother holds him: *If Christ once give himselfe to us, he will make good his owne part alway, our safety is more on his side then on ours.* If ever we have felt the love of Christ, we may comfort our selves with the constancy and perpetuity thereof, though perhaps we find not our affections warmed to him at all times, nor alike; yet the strength of a Christians comfort lyes in this, that first, *Christ is mine*, and then in the second place, *that I am his*. Now (I say) that we may be able to main-taine

taine this blessed tradition of giving our selves to Christ. Let us dwell in the consideration of his love to us, and of the necessity that we have of him, how miserable we are without him, poore, beggerly, in bondage to the Devill; therefore we must have him to recover us out of debt, and to enrich us : For Christs love carries him forth not onely to pay all our debts for us, but to enrich us, and it is a protecting, preserving love, till he brings us to Heaven his owne place, where we shall ever be with him. The consideration of these things will warme our hearts, and for this purpose serves the Ministry.

We should therefore in the next place attend upon the Word, for this very end. Wherefore serves the Ministry ? Among many others, this is one maine end, *to lay open the unsearchable riches of Christ*, therein you have something of Christ unfolded, of his Natures, Offices, and benefits we have by him, *Redemption, and freedome, and a right to all things in him*, the excellencies of another world; therefore attend upon the meanes of salvation , that we may know what riches we have in him, this will keep our affections close to Christ, so as to say, *I am his.*

And labour we also every day more and more to bring all our love to him, we see in burning glasses, where the beames of the Sunne meet in one, how forcible they are, because there is an union of the beames in a little point. Let it be our labour that all the beames of our love may meet in Christ, that he may be as the Church saith, our

S.B.R.XX.

2.

Dwell in the consideration of our misery without Christ, and our necessity to have him.

3.

We must diligently attend the ministry of the Word.

4.

We must labour every day what we can to contract, draw and to bring all our love to Christ.

SER. XX.

¹ Joh. 1.3.
¹ Joh 5.13.

The maine end
of preaching.

¹ Joh. 1.7.

as to value our being in him, so to be able upon good grounds to say, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.*

Againe, let us labour to walke in the light of a sanctified knowledge to be attained by the Gospel; for as it is, *1 John 1.3. the end of all our preaching is to assure Christ to the soule*, that we may be able to say without deceiving our owne soules, *I am my Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine.* All preaching (I say) is for this end, the terror of the Law and the discovery of corruption is to drive us out of our selves to him, and then to provoke us to grow up into him more and more. Therefore saith John, *All our preaching is that we may have fellowship with the Father and the Sonne, and they with us :* And what doth he make an evidence of that fellowship, *walking in the light, as he is light*, or else we are lyars; he is bold in plaine tearmes to give us the lye, to say we are Christs, and have communion with the Father and the Sonne, when yet we walke in darknesse, in sinnes against conscience, in wilfull ignorance, the darknesse of an evill life, we have no communion with Christ; therefore if we will have communion with him, let us walke in the light, and labour to be lightsome in our understandings, to have a great deale of knowledge, and then to walke answerable to that light and revelation that we have. Those that live in sinnes against conscience, and are friends to the darknesse of ignorance, of an evill life, Oh they never thinke of the fellowship with Christ and with God,

God, these things are meere riddles to them, they have no hope of them, or if any, their hope is in vaine, they barre themselves of ever having comfortable communion with Christ here, much lesse shall they enjoy him hereafter in Heaven.

Therefore labour every day more and more to grow rich in knowledge, to get light and to walke in that light ; to which end pray with the holy Apostle, *Ephes. 1. That you may have the Spirit of Revelation,* that excellent Spirit of God to reveale the things of God, that we may have the light discovered to us.

What a world of comfort hath a Christian that hath light in him, and walks in that light, above another man, whether he live or dye, the light brings him into fellowship with the Father of lights : He that hath this light knowes his condition and his way, and whither he goeth, when he dyeth he knowes in what condition he dyeth, and upon what grounds. The very light of nature is comfortable, much more that of grace, therefore labour to grow daily more and more in the knowledge and obedience of the light.

All professors of the Gospell are either such as are not Christs, or such as are his ; for such as are not yet, that you may be provoked to draw to fellowship with Christ. Doe but consider you are as branches cut off, that will wither and dye and be cast into the fire, unlesse you be grafted into the living stocke, Christ, you are as naked persons

*The excellency
of a Christian
walking in di-
vine light
above others.*

*A serious ex-
hortation for
such who are
not yet in
Christ, to
come in.*

SER. XX.

That in the
Gospell Christ
by the Minis-
try offereth
himself unto all

1 John 1.9.
Prov. 28
Mat. 11.11.
Mat. 5.4.

Object.

Ans. w.

persons in a storne not cloathed with any thing
to stand against the storne of Gods wrath, let
this force you to get into Christ.

And next for encouragement consider, Christ
offereth himselfe to all in the Gospell, and that
is the end of the Ministry to bring Christ and
our soules together, to make a spirituall marri-
age, to lay open his riches and to draw you to
him : If you confesse your sinnes he will forgive
them ,and you shall have mercy, *He believes those*
that are wearied and heavy laden ; and bids those
come to him that are thirsty, *Christ came to seeke,*
and to save that which was lost, Christ offers him-
selfe in mercy to the worst soule.

Therefore if there be any that have lived in
evill courses,in former times, consider that upon
repentance all shall be forgo' ten , and as a mist
scattered away and cast into the bottome of the
Sea. Christ offers himselfe to you, these are the
times, this is the houre of grace, now the water
is stirring for you to enter : doe but entertaine
Christ, and desire that he may be yours to rule
you and guide you, and all will be well for the
time to come.

Do not object I am a lothsome creature full of re-
bellions.

Christ doth not match with you, because you are
good, but to make you good ; Christ takes you not
with any dowry, all that he requires is to con-
fesse your beggery and to come with emptinessse.
He takes us not because we are clean, but because
he will purge us, he takes us in our bloud when

he

he first takes us. Let none despair either for want of worth or of strength, Christ seeth that for strength we are dead, and for worth we are enemies; but he gives us both spirituall strength and worth, takes us neare to himselfe, and enricheth us. Let none therefore be discouraged, it is our office thus to lay open and offer the riches of Christ: If you will not come in, but love your sinfull courses more then Christ, then you perish in your bloud, and we free our hands, and may free our soules from the guilt thereof; therefore as you love your owre soules, come in at length and stand out no longer.

And for those that have in some measure given themselves up to Christ, and can say, *He is mine and I am his*, let them goe on with comfort and never be discouraged for the infirmities that hang about them. For one part of Christs Office is to purge his Church by his Spirit more and more *Ephes.5.27.* not to cast her away for her infirmities, *but to wash and cleanse it more and more till it be a glorious Spouse like himselfe*: For if the husband will by the bond of nature, beare with the infirmities of the wife (as the weaker vessell) doth not Christ bind himselfe by that which he accounts us bound? Is there more love, and mercy, and pitty in us to those that we take neare us, then there is in Christ to us? What a most blasphemous thought were this to conceive so? Only let us take heed of being in league with sinne, for we cannot give our soules to Christ, and to sinfull courses too;

SER.XX.

Ezek.1.6.

Eph 5.27.

*xhortation to
them that have
given them-
selves to Christ*

SER. XX.

Christ will allow of no bigamy or double marriage where he hath any thing to doe, we must have single hearts, resolving though I fall, yet I purpose to please Christ, and to goe on in a good conversation ; and if our hearts tell us so, daily infirmities ought not to discourage us, we have helps enough for these. First, Christ bids us aske forgivenesse, and then we have the mercy of Christ to beare with weaker vessels, then his Advocation, he is now in Heaven to plead for us; if we were perfect we needed not that office: Let none be discouraged therefore, but let us labour more and more, that we may be able to comprehend in some measure the love of Christ, so will all duties come off sweetly and easily, and then wee shall be inable to suffer all things, not onely willingly, but cheerfully, and rejoice in them. Love is of the nature of fire, which as it severeth and consumeth all that is opposite, all dross and dregs, and dissolves coldness: so it quickens and makes active and lively, it hath a kind of constraining force, a sweet violence (as the Apostle saith) *the love of Christ constraineth, 2 Cor. 5.24.*

Let a man that loves the Lord Iesus Christ in sincerity, be called to part with his life, he will yeeld it as a sacrifice with comfort. Come what will, all is welcome when we are inflamed with the love of Christ, and the more we suffer, the more we find his love ; for he reserves the manifestation of his love most for times of suffering, and the more we find the manifestation of his

1 Joh. 2.2.

*That to suffer
and to facilitate all duties,
wee should labour more and
more for the
love of Christ.*

his love, the more we love him backe againe, and
rejoyce in suffering for him , that wee love
so, whether they be duties of obedience, active
or passive, doing or suffering, all comes off with
abundance of cheefulnesse and ease, where the
love of Christ is, that the soule can say, *I am my
Beloveds, and my Beloved is mine*, nothing in the
world is able to make such a soule miterable. It
followes,

He feedeth among the Lillies.

The Church here shewes where Christ
feeds. But the question is, *Whether it be the
feeding of the Church and People that is here meant,
or whether he feeds himselfe.* For answer, he both
feeds his Church among the Lillies, and de-
lights himselfe to be there ; the one followes
the other, especially it is meant of the Church,
those that are his, he feeds them among the
Lillies.

How.

Lillies are such kind of flowers as require a
great deale of nourishment, and grow best in val-
lies and fat ground; therefore when she saith, *he
feeds among the Lillies*, the meaning is, *he feeds his
Church and people in fat pasture*; as sheep in such
grounds as are sweet and fruittfull, such are his
holy Word , and the Communion of Saints;
these are especially the pastures wherin he feeds
his Church. The holy truths of God are the
food of the soule, whereby it is cherished and
nourished up to life everlasting. This whole
Booke is a kind of Pastorall (to understand the

*Quest**Answ.**What meant by
Christ's feeding
among the Lili-
ties.*

Word a little better) a Song of a Beloved concerning a Beloved; therefore Christ in many places of this Booke, he takes upon him the terme and carriage (as it were) of a loving Shepheard, who labours to find out for his sheep the fittest, fruitfullest, best and sweetest pastures, that they may grow up as Calves of the stall, as it is *Malachy 4.2.* that they may grow and be well liking.

You have (to give light to this place) a phrase somewhat like to this, where he followes the point more at large, *Cant. 1.7.* the Church there prayes to Christ, *Tell me, O thou whom my soule lovest, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noone.* Those that are comming up in the Church, desire to know with whom they may joyne, and what truths they may embrace. *Tell me where thou feedest, and where thou makest thy flocks to rest at noone;* that is, in the greatest heate and storne of persecution, as at noone day the Sunne is hottest: *For why shold I be as one that turnes aside by the flocks of thy companions?* that is, by those that are not true friends, that are false shepheards, why should I be drawne away by them? I desire to feed where thou feedest among thy sheep. Why should I be as one that turnes aside by the flocks of those that are Emulatorsto thee: as Antichrist is to Christ. Thus the Church puts forth to Christ, whereunto Christ replyes, verse 8. *If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, goe thy way forth by the footsteps of the flocks, and feed thy kids besides the shepheards tents;* that is,

is, if thou know not, goe thy way forth, get thee out of thy selfe, out of the world, out of thy former course, putt thy selfe forward, stay not complaining, goe on, putt thy selfe to endeavour, goe thy way forth, whither? *in the footsteps of the flocks,* see the steps of Christians in the best times of the Church in former times, tread in the steps of those that lived in the best ages of the Church; *feed thy kids,* thy Christians, *besides the Shepheards tents,* the best Shepheards: Marke where the Apostles and Prophets feed their sheep, there feed thou, and marke the footsteps of the flock that have lived in the best times; for of all times since the Apostles and Prophets, we must follow those Virgin best times. All Churches are so far true Churches as they have Consanguinity with the Primitive, Apostolicall and Propheticall Churches.

Therefore we are now to goe out by the footsteps of the flocke. Marke the footsteps of former Christians, *Abraham, Moses, and David,* and in Christ's time, of *John, Peter, and the rest, blessed Saints,* walke as they walked, goe their way, and *feed your selves by the shepheards tents:* mark the shepheards where they have their tents. So these woids have reference to the *Propheticall,* especially to the *Evangelicall* times, whereunto we must conforme our selves, for the latter times are Apostate times. After a certaine season the Church kept not her purity, which the Scriptures foretold directly, that we should not take scandall at it, the Church did fall to a kind of ad-

SER. XX.
1 Tim. 4.

miration of Antichrist, and embraced doctrines of devils ; therefore now we must not follow these companies that lead into by-paths, contrary to the Apostolicall wayes , but see wherein our Church agrees with the Apostolicall Churches and truth, and embrace no truth for the food of our soules, but that we find in the Gos-pell. For Antichrist feeds his flocke with winde, and with poyson, and with empty things. For what hath been the food in Popery ? sweet and goodly titles, as if they poore soules had the best Pastors in the world, when as they administer to them nothing but that which will be the bane of their soules, full of poison and fraud. This is spo-ken to unfold that place which gives light to this, spoken of the pastorall care of Christ, *he feeds his flocke among the Lillies*, plentifully and sweetly. From hence may be briefly observed, first,

Obseru.

That we need
feeding as well
as breeding in
Christianity.

1 Pet. 1. 23.

That Christ feeds as well as breeds.

And we haveneed of feeding, as well as bree-
ding : where dost thou feed ? that is, build up
thy children, and goe on with the worke begun
in them. We have need to be fed after we are
bred, and Christ (answerable to our exigence and
necessity) he feeds as well as breeds, and that
Word which is the seed to beget us , is that
which feeds too. What is the seed of the new
Birth? the Word of God, the holy promises they
are the seed , the Spirit mingling with them,
whereby a Christian is borne, and being borne is
cherished and bred; therefore, *As new borne Babes,*
faith

faith the Apostle, *1 Pet. 2. 1.* desire the sincere milke of the Word, that you may grow thereby. So that the same thing is both the seed of a Christian, and that which breeds him, the blessed truth and promises of God.

If you aske, why we must grow up and be fed still?

Doe but aske your owne soules, whether there be not a perpetuall renewing of corruption which still breaks out into new guilt every day. Therefore we have need to feed every day anew upon the promises, upon old promises with new affections, somewhat breakes out ever and anon, which abaseth the soule of a Christian, that makes him goe with a sharp appetite to the blessed truths that feed his soule.

And then againe, we need a great deale of strength, which is maintained by feeding, besides the guilt of the soule, there needs strength for duty, which must be fetched from the blessed Word of God, and the comforts thence, whereby we are able to withstand and resist, to stand and doe all that we doe.

And then we are set upon by variety of temptations within and without, which require variety of wisedome and strength, all which must be gotten by feeding; and therefore you see a Christian for his subsistence and being hath need of a feeding, cherishing, and maintaining still by the sweet and blessed directions and promises out of the Word of God.

There-

Quest.

Answ. I
In regard of
daily new guilt.

Answ. 2.
Because we
need much
strength.

Answ. 3.
In regard vari-
ety of temptati-
on needs vari-
ety of wisedome

SER. XX.

*A refutation o
their error who
steigh religiuous
reaching unto
God and be ex-
ercises of Reli-
gion.*

Therefore you may see what kind of Atheisticall creatures those are, and how much they are to be regarded that turne off all with a *compendium* in Religion, tush if wee know that we must love God above all, and our neighbour as our selves, and that Christ dyed for all, we know enough, more then we can practise, they thinke these *compendiums* will serve the turne, as if there were not a necessary of growing still further and further in distinct knowledge. Alas the soule needs to be fed continually, it will stagger else and be unsufficient to stand against temptation, or to performe duties.

A second generall point out of the text is this, *That as Christ feedeth still his flocke and people, so he feeds them fully, plentifully, and sweetly among the Lillies.* There are saving truths enough, there is an All-sufficiency in the Booke of God, what need we go out to mans inventions, seeing there is a fulnesse and All-sufficiency of truth there. Whatsoever is not in that is winde, or poison, in the Word is a full kind of feeding. In former times when they had not the Scriptures, and the comforts of them to feed on, what did the poore soules then? and what doe those remaining in Popery feed on? upon stones(as it were.) I here was a dreame of an holy man in those times (divers hundred yeares agone) that he saw one having a deale of manchet to feed on, and yet all the while poore wretch he fed on stones. What folly and misery is this, when there are delicate things to feed on, to gnaw upon stones? and what

what is all the schoole learning almost (except one or two that had better spirits then the rest) but a gnawing upon stones, barren distinctions, empty things, that had no substance in them? they had the Scriptures (though they were locked up in Latine, an unknowne tongue) they had the sweet pastures of Christ to feed on, and yet all this while they fed (as it were) on stones.

This should shew us likewise our owne blessednesse, that live in these times wherein the streames of the Goffell run abundantly, sweetly, and pleasantly. There is a fulnesse among us (even in the spirits of the worst sort) there is a fulnesse almost to loathing of that heavenly Mannah; but those soules who ever were acquainted with the necessity of it rather find a want then a fulnesse, and still desire to grow up to a further desire, that as they have plentifull meanes, so they may have plentifull affections after, and strength by those means: let us know our owne happinesse in these times. Is it not a comfort to know where to feed and to have pastures to goe to without suspition of poison? that we may feed our selves with comforts fully without feare of bane, or noisome mingling of *Coloquintida* in the por, which would disrelish all the rest? to know that there are truths that we may feed on safely. This the Church in the former place, *Cant. 1.6,7.* accounted a great priviledge, *Ob shew me where thou feedest at noone.* In the greatest heate of persecution, that I may feed among them: so then it is a great priviledge to

*Our happinesse
to be borne un-
der such plenty
of spiritual food*

SER. XX.

Obseru.

to know where to feed, and so to be esteemed, that therby we may be stirred up to be thankfull for our owne good, and to improve these privileges to our soules comfort.

But the second branch that must be touched a little, is, *That there is fulnesse nowhere but in Gods house, and that there and there only is that which satisfieth the soule with fatnesse and sweetnesse.*

That the rebukes of Scripture are sweet.

Nay not onely the Premises but the very rebukes of Scripture are sweet, the rebukes of a friend, they feed the soule, for we have many corruptions which hinder our Communion with God, so that a Christian delights to have his corruptions rebuked; for he knowes if he leave them, he shall grow into further Communion with Christ, wherein stands his happiness in this world, and the fulnesse of his happiness in the world to come.

If this be so, let us know then, that when we come to Religion we lose not the sweetnesse of our lives, but onely translate them to a farre more excellent and better condition. Perhaps we feed before upon vaine Authors, upon(as it were) gravel, vaine company, but now we have our delight (and perhaps find more pleasure) in better things, in stead of that which fed our idle fancie (vaine Treatises and the like) now wee have holy truths to delight our soule. *Believe it, a Christian never knowes what comfort is to purposetill he be downe-right and sincere in Religion.* Therefore Austin saith of himselfe, *Lord I have wanted thy sweet-*

sweetnesse over long, I see all my former life (that I thought had such sweetnesse in it) was nothing at all but huskes, empty things; now I know where sweetnesse is, it is in the Word and Truth. Therefore let us not misconceive of Religion, as of a mopish and dull thing, wherein we must lose all comfort, if we give our selves over to the study thereof; must we so? must we lose our comfort? Nay, we have no comfort till we be religious indeed; Christ feeds not his among thornes and bryars and stinking weeds, but among Lillies; dost thou thinke hee feeds thee among unsavoury, harsh, fretting, galling things? No, he feeds among Lillies. Therefore when thou commest to Religion, thinke that thou commest to comfort, to refresh thy soule, let us make use of this for our soules comfort to make us in love more with the waies of Christ.

Now to seale this further, see what the Scripture saith in some paralell places, Psal 23. *The Lord is my Shepheard*, and what is the use that David presently makes hereof? *Why, I shall want nothing*, he will feed me plentifully & abundantly, the whole *Psalme* is nothing but a commenting upon that word, *the Lord is my Shepheard*, how doth he performe the duty of a shepheard? *He makes me to lye downe in greene pastures*, and leads me by the still waters, it is not onely meant of the body, but of the soule chiefly, *he restoreth my soule*, that is, when my soule languisheth and is ready to faint, he restores it, and gives me as it were a new soule, he refresheth it. We say recre-

*How Christ the
true Shepheard
feeds, is further
explained.*

ation

S R. XX.

ation is the creating of a thing anew : so he restores my soule, he gives me my soule anew with fresh comforts : Thus the blessed Shepheard doth, and how ? Because, *he feeds among the Lillies*, the promises of the Gospell ; then he doth not only doe good to the body and soule ; but he guides all our wayes, all our goings out, *He leads us in the paths of Righteousnesse*, and why? because I deserve so much at his hands. No, for his owne name sake, because he hath a love to me, because he hath purchased me with his bloud, and given his life for his sheep, hath bought me so deare, though there be no worth in me. He goes on, though *I walke through all temptations and troubles*, which are as the valley of the shadow of death, that is, where there is nothing but disconsolation and misery ; yet *I will feare none ill, thou with thy rod and staffe dost comfort me*. If I, as a wandring sheep, venture to goe out of the way, thou out of thy care being a sweet and loving Shepheard wilt pull me in with thy hooke and staffe againe, he hath not care onely to feed us, but to governe us also. What a sweet Shepheard and Saviour have we in covenant that deales thus with us? and so he proceeds, *thou wilt prepare my table in the presence of mine enemies*, and for the time to come he promiseth himselfe as much that God as he hath been a Shepheard, (for the present) to provide all things necessary for body and soule and guidance, so surely the goodnessse of the Lord shall follow me all the dayes of my life, for he is a perpetuall Shepheard,

heard, he will not leave us till he hath brought us to Heaven. Thus we see in this place the swet care of Christ.

The like place you have, Isa. 40.11. *He shall feed his flocke like a Shepheard, he shall gather the Lambs with his armes, and carry them in his bosome, and shall gently lead those that are with young:* So he leads them into the pastures and feeds them plentifully and sweetly, not onely with sweet things, but with a tender care, which is sweeter As a Shepheard he takes into his bosome the poore lambs that cannot walke themselves, and the sheep that are heavy with young, he cares for them, *he gently leads them* that are poore, weake Christians that struggle and conflict with many temptations and corruptions, Christ hath atender care of them, he carries them (as it were) in his bosome and in his armes, and leads them gently; for indeed all Christs sheep are weake, every one hath somewhat to complaine of, therefore he hath a tender care, he feeds them tenderly and sweetly, or else they might perish.

Another place (notable for this purpose) see Ezek. 34.14. wherein you have the same metaphor from a loving Shepheard; and it is but a comment upon the Text; therefore being paralell places they may help our memories: *I will feed them in good pastures upon the high mountaines of Israel, there shall their fold be, there shall they lye in a good field, in a fat pasture, I will feed my flocke and cause them to lye downe, saith the Lord God,*

God, I will seeke that which is lost, and bring backe
that which was driven away, I will bind up that
which was broken, and strengthen that whic's is sicke,
and destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them with
judgement. Those that are Christ's true sheep have
somewhat to complaine of, either they are sicke,
or broken, or driven away, somewhat is amisse
or other; but Christ's care preventeth all the ne-
cessities of his sheep, he hath a fit salve for all
their sores: And (to apply this to the busynesse in
hand) doth not Christ feed us among the Lil-
lies? doth he not now feed us with his own body
and bloud in the Sacrement? would you have
better food? *My body is meat indeed, and my bloud
is drinke indeed;* that is, it is the only meat (with
an Emphasis) the onely meat and drinke that our
soules could feed upon, God gave his Sonne to
death to shed his bloud for my sinnes. What
would become of the hunger-bitten, thirsty
soule that is stung with Satan and his temptati-
ons, were it not for the bloud of Christ to quench
our thirst and the body of Christ given by the
Father to death for sin, were it not that the soule
could thinke upon this, where were the comfort
of the soule? All this is represented to us here in
the Sacrement, we feed on the body and bloud
of Christ spiritually, and are refreshed thereby,
as verily as our bodies are refreshed with the
bread and wine. For God doth not feed us with
empty symbols and representations, but with
things themselves, that the soule which comes
prepared by Faith, is partaker of Christ crucifi-
ed,

ed, and is knit to him though now in Heaven; there is as sure an union and communion between Christ and the Christian soule, as there is between the food and the body when it is once digested.

Therefore let us come to this blessed, to this sweet food of our soules with hungry appetites, and thankfull hearts that God hath given us the best comforts of his Word, and fed us with the sweet comfort of the Sacraments, as a Seale of the Word. We should even spend our lives much in thankfulness to God for this, that he will feed us so sweetly, that thinks nothing is good enough for our food, but his owne selfe with his owne gracious Word and Truth. Thus we should be very thankfull unto God, and now at this time labour to get hungry appetites fit for this blessed food to receive it.

• *How shall we doe that?*

Thinke seriously of the former part of thy life, and this weeke past: For Christ (the food of the soule) relisheth well with the sowre herbs of Repentance. Let us stir up in our hearts Repentance for our sinnes, and sorrow in the consideration of our owne corrupt nature and life, and when we have felt our corruptions, and have the sense of our want, then Christ will be sweet to us, the *Paschall Lamb* was to be eaten with sowre herbs, so Christ our Passeover must be eaten with Repentance.

Then withall there must be purging, there are many things which clog the stomacke, come

*How to get
hungry app-
petites to the Sa-
crament.*

I.
*To thinke seri-
ously of former
and present sins.*

2.
*There must be
purging.*

S.B.R. XX.

Iam. 1. 21. 1.

1 Pet. 2. 1.

3.
*Consider the
necessity of spi-
rituall strenght.*

not with worldly, wicked, malicious affections which puffe vp the soule, *But lay aside* (as the Apostle wisheth) *all guile, malice and superfluity*, empty the soule of all sinne and prepossessing thoughts or affections.

And then consider the necessity of spirituall strength, that we have need to grow up more and more in Christianity, to be feeding still, we have need of strong Faith and strong assurance that Christ is ours, and that we are his. Let us often frequent this ordinance, and come prepared as we should, and we shall find Christ making good

his owne ordinance in his owne best time:

so as we shall be able to say in truth of heart experimentally and feeling-

ly with the Church; *My Be-
loved is mine and I am his,
hee feedeth among
the Lillies.*



FINIS,



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